

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY



129 975

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY

THE CONSERVATIVE REVOLUTION

by Hermann Rauschning

THE VOICE OF DESTRUCTION

THE CONSERVATIVE REVOLUTION

THE CONSERVATIVE REVOLUTION

HERMANN RAUSCHNING

The process of which I am speaking is nothing less than a Conservative Revolution, on such a scale as the history of Europe has never known.

HUGO VON HOFMANNSTHAL

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS, NEW YORK

• COPYRIGHT, 1941, BY G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

*• All rights reserved. This book, or parts thereof, must
not be reproduced in any form without permission.*

Designed by Robert Josephy

MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

PREFACE

WHAT FOLLOWS HAS reference to a political enterprise to which I should like to give the name used by the Austrian writer, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, "Conservative Revolution." It is the counterpart of the process in Germany which I tried to depict as the "Revolution of Nihilism." That revolution threatens to become a world revolution. The enterprise I refer to came to nothing; it collapsed almost unnoticed.

Nevertheless some of the motives for the enterprise are of importance to our future. They may even be of decisive importance. It is therefore not merely an idle backward glance that is concerned with them. The things that are happening in this great crisis in the world's history are many-sided; they cannot be brought to a common denominator. It will therefore be necessary to concern ourselves with the side of this crisis that may be described as positive, that on which fruitful ideas and energies have shown themselves or are being developed. It is necessary to show that, however evil Nazism may be, there are vital questions behind it that must be answered and cannot be dismissed simply because Nazism has experimented with them in its own destructive way.

But what is a conservative revolution? Is not the very idea self-contradictory? It is, indeed, that contradiction that explains the failure of the enterprise. It implies a resort to the wrong means.

The endeavor made in this book to explain, through a personal narrative, what it was that led a number of political friends to join me in this resort to the wrong means, this attempt, that is to say, to work with Nazism and its revolution, and what subsequently brought us back into opposition, is not an endeavor to justify our course. Nor is it a confession of conversion to other ideas. I agree still, as I did ten years ago, with the consideration that originally led me to join the Nazis, because I still think that those considerations were essentially right and conclusive. We erred in our choice of means, but I do not know who could have avoided our error in that crisis. I do not know, therefore, who can claim a right to demand from us a justification of our course.

The suggestion came from friends of mine that I should explain those considerations. Controversies with these friends, verbal and written, on the causes of the present situation gradually made it clear to me how unfamiliar is the story of the origin of this world tragedy and how the facts have been distorted by lying propaganda, so that an account of them might be of general informative value.

It seemed to me that this account could not be better given than through the publication, with modifications, of some of these letters on the "Conservative Revolution."

CONTENTS

I	The Resignation	3
II	The Three Great Tasks	34
III	The Conservative Revolution	50
IV	The Testing Field	63
V	The German Revolution	84
VI	Catastrophic Policy	94
VII	War against Prussia	105
VIII	Europa Irredenta	116
IX	Bankrupt Farmers	123
X	Monarchism	143
XI	Opposition to Weimar	157
XII	What We Expected from National Socialism	186
XIII	The Crisis of Liberal Economy	202
XIV	The Alien Corn	210

xv	Germany Seen from Within	226
xvi	State of Community	238
xvii	The Pluralist Community	245
xviii	Western Christendom	251
xix	Delirium	259
xx	The Closed Abyss	273

THE CONSERVATIVE REVOLUTION

THE RESIGNATION

YOUR QUESTION IS meant kindly. But may I reply that it has hurt me more than unjust and malevolent judgments from opponents, to which, as a politician, one gets used. The better you come to know me—such is the implication of your question—the more incomprehensible it becomes to you that anyone of my education and descent could ever find his way into the camp of the National Socialists.

Thus, up to now, my honored friend, you have taken me either for an idiot, a credulous romantic, or for one of those men who have not had the success they hoped for in political life and who have therefore deserted their party.

What I hoped you would say was that the better you came to know me the more clearly you were able to realize the tragic situation in which we had all been living in the last twenty years and which determined the course we took; that it was growing plainer to you what it was that had driven even men of good will into Nazism. I thought you might say that, at this period, nobody could have a right to take credit for making no false step; that, at best, credit might be due for recovering from one.

So far as I am concerned, I can point out the way I carried on the duties of the president of the senate of the Free State of Danzig. I did so in the spirit of the free, democratic constitution of that state. You will no longer remember, because no political event of the slightest importance was involved, that my resignation of that office was the outcome of my defence of the Statute of Danzig against Nazi demands.

It is not I who was responsible for the infringements of the Statute of Danzig but ministers of Germany and of other great states, even of Poland, great though her interest was in that statute. They tolerated a progressive modification of the statute on the lines demanded by the Nazis, disavowing those of us who staked our material existence and our very lives on its preservation, well knowing how much that meant as an example for the future.

It is not true that we wanted to get rid of the democratic basis of our political life. What we wanted was to discover a form of democratic existence that met our needs. This seems to me to be an important distinction, and one which we may expect to be more readily grasped today than before the fall of French democracy. Never did the overwhelming majority of us envisage anything but, at worst, a temporary period of interim dictatorship until a new constitutional state could be set up. How Marxist Socialists, at all events, can grow indignant over such ideas is beyond my comprehension, considering that for nearly a quarter of a century they have preached their doctrine of an interim or educative dictatorship of the proletariat.

A temporary condition in which the constitutional rights of the citizen are in abeyance is a permissible and, at times, inevitable expedient of the democratic order. The totalitarian regime, the new total absolutism, is something entirely different. I have never met anyone who regarded such absolutism as the new and final form of German political existence. In that development such people as my friends and I, at all events, had no part.

Perhaps you would care really to learn the facts about my resignation. I send you herewith a copy of correspondence with the Danzig Senate, my appeal to the population of Danzig, and an open letter to Gauleiter Forster with reference to fresh elections in Danzig.

Of the events that led up to my letter to the Danzig Senate, I may mention that the Danzig Nazi party had demanded of me the open infringement of the statute by arresting certain Catholic priests, interning a Jewish journalist whose newspaper had been prohibited in violation of the statute, and breaking up and prohibiting the Social Democratic party. Nine months earlier I had had to answer to the Council of the League of Nations for some cases of infringement of the statute, and had given a promise to Mr. Anthony Eden, who had proposed to the council that these cases should be noted but no action taken, since the statute would be strictly observed in future. The Nazis' demand thus meant the same thing which the party sooner or later attempted with every member of independent character in order to break down his resistance and

make him a pliable tool for the future: they demanded an illegal act.

That demand was the culmination of a long, incessant struggle against the demands and the interference of the party in Danzig. I have no reason to fear any impartial criticism of my conduct of my office, if due account is taken of the special difficulties. Not only was my resignation in harmony with customary democratic political procedure, but my official activities had been devoted to the strict upholding of constitutional rights and free economic life. The fact that I did not succeed in every case was due to the special conditions, which may, not unfairly, be described as those of a sort of revolution.

When I took office as president I secured binding agreements from the leader of the Danzig National Socialists. I was to be given a free hand by the party in the conduct of official business, and the party bound itself to observe the constitution. Moreover, at the very outset I formed a coalition government, against the wish of the Nazis: a coalition with the Center party, although we had, under the constitution, a majority without this party. Both agreements were broken immediately after I started my duties, and my whole term of office was thus one long struggle against the party.

I only took office after overcoming considerable reluctance within myself. My main objection was the revelation we had had of the unscrupulousness of the Nazi political leadership, a type of leadership of which no one outside those in the innermost circles of the party had dreamed.

The first pogroms against the Jews had already taken place, and a number of old party members had rung me up to tell me that, if that was the way it was proposed to achieve the renascence of the German nation, they would have nothing more to do with the party. Meanwhile the Reichstag had been burned down, and it was becoming clear to every thinking and responsible person that the Nazi policy would bring Germany to ruin unless the Conservative and Liberal members of the German government promptly drove the Nazis from power. I had also a personal reason for wanting to retire from politics. I had just become gravely ill. Anxious patriots had then, so to speak, cornered me on a point of honor. I was told that I was perhaps the only person who could save Danzig from external political complications and prevent the outbreak of war over the Free State. The very necessity, they said, of taking early action against the extremist elements forbade a resignation at my own desire.

You may remember that, at the time, Mr. H. R. Knickerbocker, the well-known American journalist, was journeying through Europe to find an answer to the question: "Is war coming in Europe?" He began his tour in Danzig, which, at that time, was the storm center of European politics. In fact, the outbreak of war over Danzig was no remote possibility. Among other things it was his talk with me that confirmed this keen observer in his belief that war could be prevented.

I think I helped in some measure to prevent war's breaking out eight years ago. Whether that was fortunate or not

need not be considered. In any case we held at the time that it was necessary, in the interest, not only of Germany or Poland, but of all Europe, to prevent war. We were firmly of the opinion that, after an interim of revolutionary activities, conditions of legality and constitutionalism would be restored in Germany, so that, after a short critical period, the danger of hostilities would be removed.

I was by no means alone in thinking this. It was only in publicly upholding this view in opposition to the demands of the extremists in the party that I had few allies. I had solid reasons for my differences from the views of the Nazis and had no hesitation in giving expression to my opinion in talking to all the party magnates, Hitler included. I said little of my expressions of disagreement with Hitler in my published conversations with him. Critics have seized on this fact and have interpreted it as implying tacit agreement with Hitler. The simple reason for my silence on the point was that my book was not a story of "Hitler and Myself"; its purpose was to reveal Hitler's character as I had found it. My function was that of the victrola record, and my private opinion was irrelevant.

In reality, Hitler's famous powers of suggestion did not prevent me from giving my opinion where it was important to do so. I also sent Hitler, before my resignation and before my final struggle with the party had begun, a memorandum in which I sketched the main lines of the only policy for which I could accept responsibility. This policy was purely one of democratic constitutionalism and of a friendly understanding with Germany's neighbors.

I dictated this memorandum in the German Foreign Ministry, because at Danzig I was no longer safe from party spies. A telegram of congratulation which I sent to von Papen after his famous Marburg speech, a manly utterance which aroused great hopes at the time, was smuggled into the hands of the party by Danzig officials, and later played a part in the trial at which I was condemned as a traitor. At home I was surrounded by agents, including the domestic servants, who had to give daily reports of my conversations.

I do not know whether my memorandum reached Hitler. He certainly did not read it. Neurath, who was then foreign minister, was away hunting and would not be disturbed. State Secretary von Bülow, a highly intelligent, astute man, and one of those who regarded themselves as future Talleyrands, was no friend to me. Hitler gave his decision in his characteristic way by wriggling out of the difficulty: Danzig, he said, was an independent state, and there was nothing for him to decide. The Danzig party had elected me, and it was for the Danzig party to decide whether or not I possessed its confidence. This pronouncement was transmitted to me later by Neurath. Hitler refused to receive me.

These are troubles and perplexities of the past. But I may usefully mention two characteristic elements of them. One concerned the condemnation of my resignation by high officials of my acquaintance in Berlin, men who were not Nazis. They condemned it as a sort of desertion of the colors. Everybody, they argued, who had any intelligence

and ability was in duty bound to remain at his post. The time was coming when everything would depend on the actual man at each particular post. That time would come when Nazism had played itself out and leadership was needed in a rational and really constructive German policy. No one was entitled to think of himself, his honor, or his personal conscience. The whole future of the nation depended on as many key positions as possible being in the hands, not of party creatures, but of men of independence.

Today I am more convinced than ever of the fact that behind the smooth façade of the united and compact Nazi "commonweal" (*Volksgemeinschaft*) there are many personal tragedies and inward conflicts. Men have been waiting, drawn and tense, for eight years for the moment when they will be able to fill their posts more worthily than in that long period. I am not so sure today as I was six years ago that I was right in resigning.

It was, indeed, that conflict of loyalties that led me to demand a formal vote of censure from the party and not to resign of my own accord.

The second characteristic element I should mention is of an entirely different sort. It was no less a man than Field Marshal von Brauchitsch, the present commander in chief of the German army—he was then in East Prussia—who advised me to carry on the struggle with the party in such a way as to provide evidence that a workable democratic order was quite possible after Nazism. I mention the Marshal today by name because I no longer have any hope

of a better outlook from the German generals. The idea that was discussed at the time was this: An anti-Nazi coalition of all parties from the German Nationalists to the Social Democrats to be formed, organizing the trade unions for the preservation of civil order. Forster, the party leader, to be deported as an undesirable alien. The S.S. and S.A. formations to be dissolved, and the chief ringleaders to be arrested. We could rely on the Danzig police, which at that time were overwhelmingly anti-Nazi.

That would have been a sort of *coup d'état*. I rejected the idea for the good reason that I could not protect the constitution of the Free State against Nazi demands and at the same time myself break it. There were other less crucial but still important reasons. Danzig was dependent on financial assistance from the German Reich. If Germany cut off this aid to a Danzig hostile to it, there would have been riots and bankruptcy. And another consideration seemed to me to be of importance: if the restoration of parliamentary democracy after the Nazi episode was to exert a salutary and exemplary influence, it must be the result, not of a new revolutionary enterprise, a second *coup d'état*, but of the restoration of constitutionalism; it must be the result of a free statutory election.

Such an election was impending. It took place on April 7, 1935, and, in spite of Nazi terrorism, produced an opposition of nearly fifty per cent. For this election I wrote the open letter of which I send an extract herewith; in it I declared myself in favor of a free democratic constitution for Danzig, and against Nazism. Unfortunately I have only

this newspaper cutting. The paper was not particularly friendly to me and did not print the crucial final sentences verbatim.

Before this election I had tried to persuade the opposition parties in Danzig to unite in a single Democratic party and to draw up a common list of candidates standing above party. This, I urged, was essential if a decisive victory was to be achieved. In this way we should have been able to arrive in a logical and historically effectual way at a two-party system and so to build a new foundation for our political life. I proposed that the list of candidates should be headed by the Protestant ex-Superintendent General and a Catholic prelate, followed by representatives of the commercial community, the officials, and the self-governing bodies, instead of the existing members of parties. This was, perhaps, not a very practical way of meeting the just expectations of the old party members, but, apart from that, I found that events had not yet sufficiently impressed the political leaders to induce them to abandon their out-of-date points of view.

In spite of this the result of the election was excellent. If we compare it with that of the Saar plebiscite, we see at once how much vitality there was in Danzig against the dictatorship. It was the healthy reaction of our population, which, when it had recognized the true nature of Nazism, took advantage of the last opportunity of casting illusions aside and returning to the old parliamentary forms of political life.

Unfortunately the League of Nations enriched its long

record of missed opportunities by one more example. The Danzig election was open to formal repudiation owing to the acts of terrorism that had undeniably been committed. As guarantor of the Statute of Danzig the League had the power to declare the election void and to order a fresh one. The new election would have been disastrous for the Nazis. Forster, the *Gauleiter* of Danzig, estimated the party prospect, granted a fresh election, at no more than eighteen per cent of the poll. One more word about the Saar plebiscite. If it had gone against Germany, that would have been the end of the Nazi regime, in the view of the men then in real power, the army leaders—so low had the Nazi stock fallen with them. There was a great deal of calculation on a result of that sort and on a consequent change of regime. Here, too, an opportunity was missed.

But no one can be blamed for this. We in Germany or Danzig knew that every further success of the Nazi party would add to its strength and extremism, but in the governments of the democracies it was believed that a few successes would mellow the regime and give it moderation and reasonableness. What a psychological misjudgment! But how understandable in view of the history of those states!

Perhaps you will gather from this detail, in itself of no great moment, how we staked our whole existence on the defense of democratic life.

There are fathomless gulfs between some democracies and others. This became clear to all the world last summer. Perhaps, my honored friend, you will think more fairly of

our intentions if you will take it for granted that, while we declared war on one form of democracy because it was alien to our history and tradition, we were nevertheless in search of another form, not an imitation of your inimitable British democracy, but a form allied to it, drawn from the resources of genuine self-government.

ENCLOSURE

Danzig, November 19, 1934

The President of the Senate of
the Free State of Danzig

To the President of the Assembly,
Herr Senator von Wnuck,
here.

Dear Parteigenosse von Wnuck,

I acknowledge the receipt of your communication of October 31, which was passed to me on November 8, and to which I have deferred replying, for certain reasons, until after the election. My reply is as follows:

Your suspicion that I have been away from office for reasons of health is mistaken. I have been sufficiently well to give full attention to all necessary business. My absence from office has been due to a desire expressed by the *Gauleiter* of Danzig, Pg.¹ Forster, which the *Herr Gauleiter* accompanied with the statement that I no longer had his confidence and must at once refrain from all official activ-

¹ Parteigenosse—party comrade.

ity. I have complied with the *Gauleiter's* wish for reasons of party discipline, subject to a written confirmation of this wish and its reason, namely that of lack of confidence in my conduct of office. The *Herr Gauleiter* was of the opinion—and I agree with him—that this written declaration should not, in view of our constitution, be supplied by the *Gauleiter* himself but must proceed from the constitutional representative body of our movement, and he proposed to arrange matters accordingly. In permitting the state of my health to be represented in public as very unsatisfactory, I made that personal sacrifice only in the interest of our state and of the movement.

I assume that the *Herr Gauleiter* has cognizance of your communication. I gather from it that, contrary to my impression up to now, confidence in my conduct of business does not appear to be in any way shaken. I must therefore put the question whether I am mistaken in this, and whether the Senate and fraction and [parliamentary party] desire that I shall resume my duty. I am prepared to do so at any moment. If this should not be the case, and should the party leaders, contrary to the clear and definitely declared situation, wish now to shift the responsibility for my resignation on to my shoulders, I must regretfully state that I am not in a position to comply. The responsibility for my resignation and for any consequences of it must be perfectly clear and unambiguously accepted by the party leadership and the fraction. *I must decline to take upon myself the reproach of leaving Danzig in the lurch at a moment of the gravest peril.* I must there-

fore point out to party and fraction that I expect a written vote of no confidence, with grounds stated, if my resignation is desired. I am compelled to do this for the further reason that the expedient desired by the *Herr Gauleiter*, to attribute my resignation to a grave illness in order not to imperil the unity of the party in full view of the public, is now unfortunately entirely out of the question for me. Both the *Herr Gauleiter* and the Vice-President, and evidently other personages, have made—as can be proved—the statement, among the most authoritative circles of the party, both in Danzig and in the Reich, including the highest official departments and ministries, that I allowed my resignation to be “bought” by money payments or promises. The *Herr Gauleiter* has, moreover, repeatedly made the statement that I am a traitor and, as such, deserve to be shot. This unfair treatment of a simple conflict of opinion, which has deliberately been spread far and wide, with the addition that I must have been guilty of something because I am no longer to be seen in Danzig, has made it entirely impossible for me to lay down my office except under a formal vote of no confidence.

If, contrary to the statements in your communication of October 31, the party should still be prepared to pass this declaration of no confidence, I should like to supply for your information certain material, as follows, concerning the existing differences between the *Gauleiter's* office and myself. I must forego giving the details that would be needed for a full account of the material conflict over the policy to be pursued in Danzig, which has clearly led to

the *Herr Gauleiter's* wish for my resignation. I am ready to give this full account at any time, at a sitting either of the Senate or of the fraction. But I should like, among other things, to devote a few words to the most essential and urgent task, that of the maintenance of Danzig's economic independence, because I have noted with the greatest anxiety how no decision that promises any remedy has been arrived at the Senate:

1. The central question in Danzig's economic life, beside which all other questions are of secondary importance, is that of the covering of the adverse balance of foreign payments, which amounts to a figure on the order of 3,000,000 gulden (florins) a month. On the solution of this question depends the stability of our currency, the preservation of our economic independence, and, therewith, the maintenance of the German character of Danzig. If we do not succeed in finding a remedy for the inadequacy of our foreign-exchange settlement, the shortage in our balance of foreign payments must be taken from our currency cover and must lead in the space of a few months—if the present financial policy is continued, five months—to the collapse of our currency.² This bankruptcy would place Danzig at the mercy of foreign powers.

The *Herr Gauleiter* says that he has the *Führer's* definite promise that the German Reich will see to what is needed, but I regard it as unjustifiable to rely purely on aid from the Reich, since the Reich continues to be unable

² Actually the gulden had to be devaluated five months later, at the beginning of May, 1935.

to provide in sufficient time the foreign exchange required for adequate help. I refer here to the menacing situation into which the peasantry has already been brought through the nonpurchase and nonpayments of quotas. I do not overlook the difficulties in the way of the liberation of Danzig which arise from a renunciation of external assistance. Nevertheless, the way to the maintenance of Danzig's German character lies through dependence on her own resources.

The *Herr Gauleiter* takes up the standpoint that there is no possibility of this, that Danzig has always been dependent on external aid: before the war from the state contracts for the dockyards and from the strong garrison. This view of the *Herr Gauleiter's* is mistaken. I may point to the carefully worked out practical proposals of my colleagues—proposals, it is true, which are not valued by the *Gauleiter's* office. So far these proposals have been carried out only on a very modest scale, and this is because of what follows here; and here I come to the crucial point: The condition for any possibility of developing an economic life in Danzig out of her own resources is the restoration of our capacity to compete with the sterling bloc. I explained in detail to the *Herr Gauleiter* at the beginning of the year the paths that lead in this direction, and I do not want to discuss them in detail here. What is common to every practicable path, and inevitable, is, however, that the restoration of this competitive capacity affects our income in some way, not actually its real amount, but its numerical expression. No doubt we must not attempt to compete with

countries at a low level, like Poland. We must leave to such countries the branches of employment that make small claims on personal capacity. But we cannot in any way escape from adjustment to the high-level countries of the sterling bloc by the continuation of impossible wage rates. The *Herr Gauleiter* has never, to my knowledge, contested this statement of the facts in principle, but in spite of this he has permitted subordinate and high officials of the party to take steps and make public statements which were completely incompatible with this view and recognition. Yet these very necessities mentioned, since they affect incomes, call with quite special urgency for whole-hearted co-operation of the party with the government, especially as there are, in any case, difficulties in the execution of the work which can only be overcome by expert organization.

In this situation, admittedly one of difficulty—this situation, which has been clearly characterized by me since February and March of this year, and has been made the subject of special discussion—the *Gauleiter's* office considers that we must be prepared at all times to try an entirely baseless policy of hope in an early improvement. This waiting policy is so particularly dangerous because the opportunities that today might still promise relief will be past in a very short time. To this there is the following to add: The process of depletion of foreign exchange is greatly accelerated by the effects of a systematic provision, itself inadequate, of employment. I have pointed out, again

for a year past, the difference between our situation and that of the German Reich, and have always sought to make it clear that the projects for the provision of employment, as planned hitherto, were bound to lead to a progressive weakening of our currency. I have stood out with the utmost emphasis against such plans as that of theater building, etc. The provision of employment is in itself one of the most necessary of tasks, and I have myself paid quite special attention to it; but my requests for it to be placed on a new and clear basis have been ignored. Either, therefore, there will shortly be a great increase in unemployment, or the process I have mentioned, the exhaustion of our currency cover, will take place at a considerably faster rate.

2. The economic situation, however, plainly determines the line to be taken in home affairs. Inevitable government measures will need, in my view, a two-thirds majority, and are scarcely likely to be practicable under the plenary powers law. Measures of a very unpopular sort make it seem desirable *to extend to the other parties a share in responsibility*, quite apart from the fact that the unanimity of the population of Danzig, based on a knowledge of the grave emergency, is indispensable to the practicability of these measures. It seemed to me, therefore, to be necessary, in view of the grave troubles of the coming year, at least to arrange a truce with the members of the non-Marxist parties.

Instead of this the *Gauleiter's* office required me to make

ruthless use of the powers of the state in the suppression of the remaining parties and even to arrest certain Catholic priests. Apart from the fact that, in the existing constitutional situation in Danzig, *the desired result can never be achieved by methods of repression but only by reasoning and persuasion*, even a short struggle would rob us of all opportunity of legislative enactment of necessary measures. Moreover, Danzig cannot dispense with at least making an effort to secure foreign loans if it is to maintain its currency. Such loans will be difficult to get in any case, and would become impossible if Danzig should come under the full pressure of political and economic boycott from abroad, such as would be bound to ensue on ruthless procedures against ecclesiastical elements, Jews, and so on. For that reason, among others, I stood out against an election over those other issues, which would only accentuate existing differences instead of preparing the way for the common front, essential to us, of all Germans of good will in Danzig.

3. The demands made in regard to home policy would also, and especially, have had inevitably the worst possible influence on the foreign situation. It is a fundamental error, in regard to Danzig's situation in foreign policy, to assume that the accommodation with Poland, or the newly established relationship between Germany and Poland, has now assured Danzig's sovereignty.... It is also necessary, however, to make sure of factors in foreign politics which, in the very probable event of new conflicts arising, will be

able to give support to Danzig. Accordingly, before my first government declaration, I had a very intimate discussion with the representative of Soviet Russia, in order to assure us of Russia's help, which has repeatedly proved its value. Even in that declaration the passage I proposed about good relations with Russia was struck out by the party leaders. Events in the Reich then made it impossible for me to follow the policy in this direction which I had planned. My efforts to interest England had rather better success. I succeeded, at all events, in obviating outspoken British hostility by bringing evidence that constitutional conditions were being maintained in Danzig. It was of special urgency, however, to hinder the League of Nations Council in its partisanship against Danzig by a strictly legal and constitutional attitude. This, after Germany's withdrawal from the council, became an absolute essential for Danzig's position. Any interventions by the representative of the League of Nations in Danzig's internal affairs, such as unfortunately were of frequent occurrence in past years, and especially any such as last year's press affair, which led to proceedings before the council, would be bound to undermine Danzig's already restricted sovereignty. It must be plainly stated that the statute, placed under the protection of the council and controlled by it, is at present Danzig's only guarantee. . . . The League of Nations Council is thus, unwelcome as the fact may be, Danzig's natural protector. . . . The League of Nations' representative, however, even if sympathetic to Danzig, would be compelled to carry any new infringe-

ment of the statute, such as, for instance, the prohibition of opposition newspapers on insufficient reasons or a further conflict with the Center, to a hearing before the League of Nations Council. There can be no question of what would be the outcome of such a hearing: it must lead in the end to Danzig's authority suffering a severe shock in full view of the public or to Danzig's being forced into the course, highly dangerous at present, of an open conflict with the League of Nations....I must emphatically point out that my policy in all its elements is a carefully thought-out system, which can only offer, as such, a prospect of the preservation of Danzig. If sections of it are struck out, it must before long lead to the collapse of the whole.

4. The crises and conflicts indicated are ultimately bound up, however, with what in my view is a mistaken conception of the relationship between state and party. The anchoring of the state in the opinions and the world of ideas of National Socialism can only be effected by as thorough a recruitment as possible of party comrades of character and ability in the administration. But these party elements must not be abused from the moment they take up responsible posts, but must continue to be respected as party mandatories; otherwise the party will itself go to pieces through its continued out-and-out criticism of the state and of its disorganization. The view that speaks of the state as a machine and places the party above it is one that misconceives the nature of the state. If the party con-

tinues to retard the state as its antagonist, it will lose the last bulwark of the independence of the Germans of Danzig. The present situation, however, of continual interference with the organs of the state has already produced such a derangement of the latter's authority that it is impossible to consider the further developments which may come without the gravest anxiety. I pointed out the danger a year ago, and received from the Deputy to the Leader the clear decision that the association between party and state must be effected only through the ruling president and that direct interference with subordinate departments was not permissible. In spite of this decision the process of disintegration of the state's authority and of the necessary subordination has gone still further. *The universal fear of a large section of the officials of falling out of favor with the party has led to toadyism, servility, and lack of character. The courage for conscientious work, for expressing opinion, and for taking responsibility is alarmingly deficient*, and this almost eliminates the needed application of knowledge and experience to the discussion of laws and regulations.

There is no need for me to mention particular cases in this connection. The conditions for the acceptance of statutory responsibilities by the president and the Senate as a whole require uniformity and continuity of policy, and a clear authority to give orders and instructions, both in the individual prerogatives of the politically responsible authorities and in the heads of state and municipal depart-

ments. This must be insisted on the more emphatically since the measures which alone promise the future salvation of Danzig can only be carried out if the government possesses the strongest possible authority. If at every step, as in the past, party authorities obstruct business and are supported, frequently without justification, by the party leadership, the past partisan and mercenary administration is merely shifted, not abolished.

In this letter I have only briefly touched on a few essential points. To sum up:

1. I am prepared at any time to take over my official duties. But for the success of our policy an agreement must be arrived at concerning the measures to be put through in coming months. I am prepared at any time to make detailed statements on the subject.
2. I refuse to resign voluntarily, and draw attention to the necessity of a declaration, with reasons stated, of no confidence.

Heil Hitler!

(SIGNED) Dr. Rauschning

Senate of the Free State of Danzig.

Danzig, 19.XI. 34.

To Dr. Rauschning,
President of the Senate,
here.

Up to now you have given no reply to the letter from the leader of the fraction in the assembly, Herr von

26 THE CONSERVATIVE REVOLUTION

Wnuck, of 31.X. The undersigned members of the Danzig Senate accordingly find themselves compelled to make a final application to you. The undersigned draw your attention to the statements made to the Vice-President of the Senate and to Gauleiter Forster in the presence of Senator Huth. The undersigned expect from you that you will declare within forty-eight hours whether you wish or not to retire from your office of president of the Senate on the ground of the illness to which you have yourself referred.

If at the end of the period named we should not have a statement from you in our hands, we should have to assume that you are departing from all the agreements come to between Herr Greiser, Vice-President of the Senate, and you, and we should therefore be compelled to take a further step of our own accord for the settlement of the whole matter.

(SIGNED) Wilhelm Huth Greiser Wnuck
 Paul Batzek Wiersinski-Kaiser
 Dr. Hoppenrath Dr. Kluck

Warnau, 21.XI. 34.

President of the Senate
of the Free State of Danzig
To the Senate of the Free State of Danzig.
To be delivered to the Vice-President.

I acknowledge the receipt of your communication of 19.XI., transmitted to me on the night of the 19th-20th.

On this matter I refer you to my communication of 15.XI. to the *Herr Gauleiter* and to my communication of 19.XI. to the National Socialist fraction of the assembly, which latter was handed at 2 P.M. of the same day to the chairman of the fraction, Herr Senator von Wnuck, by Herr Schlierholz. I consider my attitude to be adequately explained in that communication, and have only to add the remark that the forms chosen by you in your communication preclude me from further discussion of your communication.

(s.d.) Dr. Rauschning.

Danzig, November 22, 1934.

Assembly fraction of the N.S.D.A.P.⁸

In reply to your communication of the nineteenth of this month I transmit herewith a vote of no confidence signed by the members of my fraction. I await the laying down of office within forty-eight hours.

(s.d.) v. Wnuck

To Herr Dr. Rauschning
Warnau.

The assembly fraction of the N.S.D.A.P. as the statutorily competent corporate body of the party, expresses

⁸ National Socialist German Labor party.

to the President of the Senate, Doctor Rauschning, its lack of confidence, because the fraction regards the continuance of Dr. Rauschning in the Senate as insupportable for the good of the Free State.

(38 SIGNATURES)

Danzig, November 22, 1934.

Danzig, November 23, 1934.

The President of the Senate of the
Free State of Danzig.

To the National Socialist assembly fraction,
to be delivered to the leader of the fraction,
Herr Senator von Wnuck,
Danzig.

I acknowledge the receipt of your communication of
23.XI. Thereupon I have today declared my resignation.
I enclose a copy of the communication sent to the Assembly.

(s.d.) Dr. Rauschning.

Danzig, November 23, 1934.

The President of the Senate of the
Free State of Danzig.

To the Assembly of the Free State of Danzig,
to be delivered to the President, Herr Senator von Wnuck.

I hereby lay down my office as President of the Free
State of Danzig.

(s.d.) Dr. Rauschning.

Danzig, 23.XI. 1934.

The President of the Senate
of the Free State of Danzig.

To the National Socialist assembly fraction,
To be delivered to the fraction leader,
Herr Senator von Wnuck,
Danzig.

To obviate any trouble from disturbed public feeling,
I have sent to the press a statement of which I transmit a
copy herewith.

(sd.) Dr. Rauschning.

Farewell Words to the Danzigers.

Special considerations have led me to lay down my office as President of the Free State of Danzig, as from today. In bidding farewell to the population of Danzig, I appeal to the population, in the spirit in which I tried to conduct my office, that everyone may realize his joint responsibility for the great community and may set the petty individual interest in the background. I express firm confidence that Danzig's population will come together in the State of Danzig more and more in an indissoluble community of destiny. My departure will alter nothing in our great aims. Many hundred years of history, during which manly generations, standing on their own feet and depending on their own strength, preserved Danzig's way of life and her German character, remain for us a daily example and a grave obligation. Not to wait for help from abroad, but to

seek the forces of salvation in ourselves, is our noblest task. Uprightness and human worth, truthfulness and sense of honor, energy and self-sacrificing courage, give us the qualities that will overcome our difficulties amid the changes of our day. To be true to ourselves is to lay the foundation for loyalty and trust toward state and commonweal. My cares and my hopes are now as always, in firm trust in God's merciful providence, for this country and its people and the German spirit in its difficult post in the East.

(SD.) Dr. Rauschning

President of the Senate of the Free State of Danzig.

Danzig, 23.XI. 1934.

To the editors:

1. Deutsches Nachrichtenbuero,
2. Danziger Vorposten,
3. Danziger Neueste Nachrichten,
4. Danziger Tageblatt,
5. Dako,
6. Danziger Volkszeitung,
7. Danziger Volksstimme.

Newspaper extract from Rauschning's open letter to Gauleiter Forster, for the elections on April 7, 1935.

The Franconian leader, Julius Streicher, who came to Danzig a few days before the election, charged Dr. Rauschning, the former National Socialist President of the Senate, with high treason and with being a renegade. In an open letter, which unfortunately was confiscated by

the police, and which was directed to the Danzig Gauleiter Forster, he (Dr. Rauschning) wrote, among other things, what follows:

"Until now I have considered that it was only fair to keep entirely in the background in this election and at least to give no public expression to my deep anxiety about political events in Danzig, although in so doing I suffered severe pangs of conscience, sharing the concern for the security of the state and the statute that has become a duty for every citizen. I have held back, even to the point of sacrificing my personal honor, in my resolve to abstain from all further political activity. I caused no further steps to be taken when the satisfaction demanded for the discrediting charges repeatedly made by you in a wide circle was denied me. Charges coupled with the menacing statement that I deserve to be shot.... I was also silent when you expelled me from the party.... I was silent even when repeated complaints to the supreme party court brought no reply.... I resigned myself to all this in the interest of the security of the state.... The public attacks by Herr Streicher, made with your approval, have now placed me in such a position that I must abandon consideration for the party.... The issue on April 7 is not concerned with acceptance of National Socialism, nor with that of Germandom; the issue is whether the Danzigers want a personage like you as unlimited dictator, whether they will trust themselves to you and a policy of adventures.... It would be of immeasurably fatal significance to the future of Danzig and her German population if you were to succeed in

your intention of giving a legal basis to a policy which must end within measurable time in grave disasters. Instead of proceeding from the difficult tasks of foreign and economic policy for the safeguarding of the future and the German character of Danzig, your policy obviously begins and ends with the claim, concerned only with home policy, to secure exclusive power.... The transformation you want of the constitutional position would, moreover, have the result that the Polish national group would be granted liberty to place itself outside the despotic restrictions applicable to the rest of the population. Full civil equality for the Polish as for every other national or religious minority—yes! But to give the Polish national group the civil rights of freedom of association, freedom of religious worship, equality before the law, which are to be restricted for the German Danzigers in favor of arbitrary control by you alone, Herr Forster—no! Danzig needs once more a government of competent knowledge and of intellectual capacity; a government of serious work, familiar with every detail, not merely confining its control to outlines and generalities; a government of sober judgment, clear authority, and sense of order. Even if today the German people of Danzig are not yet ripe for the realization of the pernicious and degrading character of a policy of intoxication and hysteria, of organized exorbitance and loud-mouthed presumption, which has nothing to do with manly resolution and stern fulfillment of duty—the day will come when they will be ripe for it....”

Dr. Rauschning ended his open letter with the advocacy

of a commonweal that is not founded on external uniformity but must be rewon every day in the conflict of views and characters—a conflict carried on, however, amid respect for one another and for the human dignity even of opponents, and amid common labor for the same aim . . . “for freedom of the conscience, which cannot be bound by any sort of claim to blind obedience; for the Christian faith, which is the heart of our civilization and the essence of our culture, out of the sacred precincts of which we cannot step without falling into self-stultification and idle playing with ideas.”

Dr. Rauschning was no longer safe from attacks on his life after the communication of the open letter to the Danzig public. He visited relations in Thorn, where he is staying at present.

II

THE THREE GREAT TASKS

THANK YOU FOR your kind letter. Please do not misunderstand me when I reply that I am not concerned for any recognition of my personal behavior but for your realization of the true center of our destiny. May I add what follows:

You write that you are still no clearer as to what our purpose was in associating ourselves with such a movement as Nazism for a renewal of democracy or a struggle for a particular form of it. You hint this very cautiously, as is always done in your courteous country. Divested of the courtesy, your objection would run: "Renewal of democracy by means of Nazism—that cannot be seriously meant."

I am in the painful situation of having to say that it is seriously meant. Perhaps it contains an element of tragic irony—unintentional irony.

You go on to ask a number of questions. If I were to answer them we should find ourselves at once in the wide field of theories and philosophical argumentation. You have often enough chaffed me for my inclination to the abstract; let us stick now to the concrete.

You ask what practical political tasks I envisaged, for

instance, in Danzig. In reply I must first ask you another question: what were, what still are, the great tasks of our time? If we leave aside all that is of secondary importance, we are left with these three problems:

The ending of unemployment and the provision of security from want. That means a new social order.

The prevention of economic crises. That means changes in the existing economic order.

The overcoming of national rivalries and the provision of security from wars. That means a new supernational political order.

That is “high-falutin’” stuff, you will reply, and I can see a glint of friendly mockery in your eyes. But tell me, my good friend, are not these the things for which we are really fighting in this war? They were literally the very tasks we set ourselves. Do not forget that it was necessity that made us see clearly: it is always necessity that lifts us up above ourselves.

I will anticipate the objection which you will make at once and will say myself: These are, possibly, some of the tasks of our time, but that is not saying much. The things that matter are the solutions, and, you will say, no one will convince you that anything that Nazism, or any of these totalitarian regimes, has concocted in the way of a new order can represent an advance in the direction in question, or even provide a single suggestive idea or an order fit for free peoples.

“It is not peace but the sort of peace that matters,” said one of your ministers not long ago. Similarly one may say

that it is not these questions that matter but the sort of answer given to them.

If that is your line of argument, I will not deny that the sort of solution that seemed conceivable to us ten years ago was vague and thoroughly defective, and perhaps even entirely mistaken. But you cannot deny that we envisaged these tasks at a time when all those clever and well-informed people among you and among us, all those experts and economists, were still talking in terms of passing depressions and marked crises and relying, all of them, on the healing processes of time and automatic recovery. We who had been forced to take the lead by the pressure of our own necessities were bound to go wrong. It is always the fate of the beginner amid great changes to shoot far beyond the mark, sighting badly.

You will object that I am already beginning to get lost in generalities and that what you are after is one concrete fact: you want to know what practical step we expected to make in the direction of the solution of these three desiderata. I will not be so cheeky as to retort by asking you what sort of solution you envisage. What possible solution can one envisage if everything is to be excluded that goes to make the substance of the Fascist and Bolshevik experiments? I do not ask this question in order to place you in a difficulty (since, so far as I can see, there are as yet no clear and adequate conceptions here in England of the answer to it). I ask it in order to show you the point of departure of *our* thoughts.

Every *radical* solution must be eliminated from our

thinking. We must hold to the things that have made up our Western civilization. Our solution will therefore remain within the lines of our tradition. This implies among other things the retention of private ownership and of the economic system based on private profit. Politically it implies the retention of the nation's individualist standards, not their abolition. The most that it implies is a limitation of their scope. It implies a social order that has not been purchased at the price of the abandonment of each individual's freedom or of his sphere of private existence. This sets very narrow limits to the possibilities of a new order in the three directions mentioned. It excludes what is called "economic and political planning," at all events as the exclusive framework of the new order. Another element seemed to us to determine the method of achieving our aims. A new phenomenon has emerged, incalculable, menacing, like a natural force, bursting the bounds of all past forms of state and society—the masses.

We must try, we felt, to divide the masses. We must try to hold the masses in check through themselves. The masses could be tamed only by the masses. Political leadership could only be won and kept through the masses. The securing of a basis among the masses seemed to us to be the practical teaching of all political wisdom.

The non-Socialist parties, Liberal and Conservative, and any parties that aim at politically surviving in the age of the masses, must become mass parties. May I remind you of the history of your own political parties? When did your Conservative party become a mass party? Disraeli

made it so. Disraeli's example was before our eyes when we approached the mass party of Nazism. Not to enroll ourselves in it, but to bring it over to us, and out of it to provide the mass basis that was lacking to the whole lot of our non-Socialist democratic parties, and to the German National Conservative party in particular.

My friend, this interpretation is not an afterthought. Nor is it a dishonorable and criminal piece of villainy, as the Socialist Left Wing in Germany represented it. We were simply forced, by an elemental, natural compulsion, to look about for a mass basis of this sort. What would have become of Germany's democratic liberties if one day the whole of the masses had been brought to a common denominator and delivered over to the law of progressive radicalization? A single mass group, from the Communists to the Nazis, following the extremest of the agitators? All those years we were under the pressure of the possibility that the Nazi masses would march over to the Communists.

You will object that the danger of a Communist revolution in Germany never existed. It is the objection that one constantly meets. It is true that there was no direct danger of that sort. The indirect danger was so much the greater. Germany was threatened, not with a Communist revolution, but with the "revolt of the masses," to use Ortega y Gasset's phrase. Such arguments overlook, moreover, an important factor, the youth. The youth in all camps were becoming extremist. The Social Democratic youth—insofar as the Majority Socialists in Germany had still any following among the youth—had long gone over to extremist

views that carried them far from the self-imposed moderation and the democratic basis of the old Socialist leaders.

The youth had to be won. How? By preaching to them the wisdom of old age, teaching them resignation, advising renunciation of all hope of the fulfillment of their ideas? We are all revolutionaries while we are young. The young are won by speaking a language that articulates great emotions, movement, passion, sacrifice, and great ideas.

Can you place yourself in that situation? What would have been your feeling, in such circumstances, in regard to the Nazi movement? You have certainly heard all sorts of objectionable things about it. You let them pass; you say to yourself: "They are young men; we will teach them. Not everything is as hot in the eating as in the cooking. Young birds of this sort learn to moult—to turn over a new leaf." You will add: "A very unsavory set of leaders, rowdies *en masse* among the old party comrades, and then that appalling program, with its stupid paragraphs. But there is energy at the back of it, rhythm and new life. There are hundreds of thousands full of good will, of passionate devotion. That is political capital; it must not be squandered, it must be got into the right hands."

Finally, to clinch the matter—you have no choice. The great mass parties carry the electorate with them. The respectable vote falls and falls. Other non-Socialist parties are securing an increased vote as best they can. The Left Democratic State party, for instance—it has concluded an alliance with the romantic Young German Order. "Stock

Exchange plus Holy Grail," is the cynical comment of one of these Democrats on their own move. There is nothing for it. If democracy is not to come to grief through its own parliamentary mechanism, the non-Socialist parties must have their own mass following; they must bring in the young by hook or crook.

When I joined the Nazi party in the summer of 1931, the majority of my Conservative fellow-agriculturists approved. They regarded it as a temporary seconding to a friendly unit.

That was not my idea of it.

For there was a further consideration. There was no conservatism left in Germany. What was regarded as conservatism was reaction, mere representation of the interests of property. It was necessary to create a great and genuine Conservative movement by the union of all the great constituent traditions of this Western civilization. Socialism had its place in this alongside the traditional elements in the national consciousness and socialism, National Socialism, carried this synthesis in its very name. It was not a matter of "stealing" socialism from the workers. What was needed was to wrest conservatism from its encystment in the interests of the propertied class and to make it the great party that could with justification claim to represent also the propertyless masses. It was precisely the recognition that the German Nationalists, under the leadership of the stubborn old party stallion, Hugenberg, had become the crass representation of the narrowest economic interests of property, which led many of the younger Conservatives with

me into National Socialism. It was not tactical considerations alone but the honest conviction of the necessity of co-opting socialism into the body of Conservative elements and into a Conservative order that led us to interpret National Socialism as the suitable instrument for this new synthesis.

You know Germany well enough to remember how widely such ideas were discussed among Conservatives in the earliest days of the Weimar Republic, and how many essays were made in that direction. They ranged from "Prussian Socialism" to the ideas of the former State Secretary Richard von Moellendorff, who came to so tragic an end.

You would greatly misunderstand the whole process if you inferred from my summary that nothing more was in our minds than vote-catching for the German Nationalists. When, after the defeat in the last war, the old German Conservative party was reconstructed, taking the name of People's party with the addition of the ornamental epithet, "German Nationalist," it had already given evidence of its intention to become a mass party. You will remember—the event fell within the first years of your stay in Berlin—that at one moment the German Nationalists gained such voting strength that they became one of the greatest parties in Germany. This promising start, however, led nowhere. All the non-Socialist parties in Germany suffered, indeed, what in Berlin was called *Stimmenschwund*, the fading away of their support in the country.

There was thus no purpose to be served in once more

merely attaining a momentary success by “roping in” the Nazi mass movement for the benefit of the non-Socialist Right Wing and preventing it from uniting with the Left extremists to form a mass party with an absolute majority. It would not have helped us in any way to take advantage of the new expedient of mass propaganda or the “engagement” of a popular mass leader, such as Hitler then was in our eyes, to bring part of the masses over to the support of the bourgeois parties of the Right. The problem was a much more difficult one. If the peril latent in the modern rise of the masses was really to be removed, means must be sought for, so to say, “de-massing” the masses.

How could that be done? What did it mean? Were not the masses with us always? They were, of course. But the complete lack of structure and detachment of the modern industrial masses are relatively modern features. We have often discussed this problem and considered its psychological and political consequences. I do not want to return to that subject. To anyone who, in his sheltered, comfortable week-end house, has no suspicion of the existence of this new natural force of the masses, which is hammering everywhere at the existing order of society, such ideas as I am putting forth here must seem confused, obscure, and pointless.

These masses, my friend, are the dominating feature of the new state of things in all civilized countries. Hitler did not invent them, nor did the other totalitarian regimes. Hitler and the others only made use of them, either to consolidate their hold over the power of a new mass-elite,

a new group of mass leaders, or to carry their political doctrines into practice. With the coming of this new elite the plebiscitary mass-democracy has been ousting the old ruling class of the parliamentary democracies. This happened in due course in Germany as it had done already in Russia and Italy; and it was just this that we were out to prevent, this complete ousting of the former elements of democratic political life by a new group of persons and by new political methods. If, instead of this, we helped this very group, this new mass-elite, into the saddle as ruling power, we were not solely to blame.

I am not concerned, however, at present with this paradoxical turn of events which produced just the opposite of what we had intended; what I am concerned with is our ideas of the possibility of articulating the masses, of leading them into natural associative forms of existence. We saw the only means of eliminating the modern mass conditions in industry and in the great cities to be the revival of old forms of self-government and the development of nuclei of new, modern self-governing bodies.

Much seemed to have been achieved already—for instance, on the land, where the rural communities and the whole agricultural population had been awakened to their own social and political character. This sounds very reactionary. I will remind you, however, of the Rural Council of Gericke, which later was so scurvily handled by the Nazis. I will remind you of the Countrymen's Movement of the Pomeranian, von Rohr-Haus Demmin. (I was in touch with both movements.)

But I do not want to go into a mass of details here that are now only of historical interest. Our line of thought led us to the conclusion that the parliamentary institution was not alone sufficient for the political leadership and disciplining of the masses, with their incalculable emotions and their helplessness in face of all the demagogues and inflammatory propagandists. If we did not want to find ourselves suddenly faced at every election with completely baffling situations, which could not but give Germany's political life a permanently catastrophic character, it was essential that new organs should be created for the safeguarding and control of public democratic life. Was it historically inevitable that in the age of the masses there must be a progress from the system of rule by notabilities, familiar in the older democracies, past that of parliamentary mass-democracy, to plebiscitary mass-democracy with its charismatic leader, and finally to the Caesarian mass-dictatorship, as Weber had predicted so long ago as 1919 in his remarkable essay, "Politik als Beruf" ("Politics as a Profession")? We did not admit it. In our view plebiscitary mass-democracy should be enabled to retain the character of democratic life, before it could develop into the Caesarian form, by decentralizing the state, creating many independent centers of self-government, and making these jointly responsible for the state and society in general.

"Aha!" you will exclaim at once, "corporations! The syndicate state! The occupational parliament!" Please do not confuse the corporation, the organ of genuine self-administration, with the offices the Fascist government

has set up under that name in order to subject economic life and social institutions to the absolutism of the state. The system of corporative bodies, as an institution existing alongside and not in place of parliament, has unfortunately been compromised by Fascism and Nazism. The idea we had was entirely different: that of taking out of direct parliamentary control a number of political and social functions that had hitherto belonged to the centralist state and delegating these to genuinely autonomous statutory bodies. The essence of our ideas was not the creating of a second chamber, a class or economic or occupational chamber, but the *decentralization* of a centralist mass-state, with its inevitable steady tendency to totality and to the modern absolutism, to Caesarism, into what can only be called a "*pluralist*" community!

I know that when I come to this subject I once more approach the limit of your readiness to follow me. It is easy for you to refuse. *You* are living in a society of that type, perhaps without realizing the greatness of your heritage. *We* have laboriously to piece it together out of the wreckage of our catastrophic history.

Permit me now to say one more word about youth and about why we were bound, for internal as well as other reasons, to frame our language in "revolutionary" terms. You have shown kind interest in a few articles in which I sketched the tragic situation of our youth, and asked what could be done with them in the future—how the desperate ravages that have been effected by these eight or ten years of nihilistic revolution could be made good. But we were

faced with a similar situation, though not quite so tragic, before the Nazi regime. What was the state of these young people who had grown up during the last war, during the infinite confusion of standards of the inflation period, and during the tumultuous years of a permanent latent revolution; these young people who had lost all respect for authority? Was not the germ of the whole of this nihilism already present among them, needing only a striking idea to waken it into activity?

Surely, my friend, you will not be content with the facile popular interpretation that is offered you from so many sides? Is it really likely that all this destruction of a morally and politically respectable democratic world was simply the product of ten years of Nazism? The demolition of the ancient heritage of our civilization could only be the work of generations. More than a century of systematic destruction and subtle "unmasking" of all ideologies, all accepted moral and political standards, was needed to bring our youth into this condition of utter nihilism, in which they no longer believe in anything but themselves and their leader, and abandon themselves to all the instincts of the untamed savage—cruelty, greed for power, sensuality, and the lust for war.

Even before the last war the youth of all classes had broken out of the world of respectability with its notions of utility and material progress. I will not retell to you this whole tragi-comedy of the German youth movement. But I must mention one serious matter because, I think, it affects your young people. These young people are no

longer content with the relativity of all standards. They no longer feel it to be an enrichment of their lives to have access even to the remotest stimuli and truths. They demand fixed standards, unambiguous judgments. They demand a *faith*. They are different, too, in another critical point from us older people, for whom the individual personality was the central element in the passage through life. Compared with our sophistication, these young people are primitive. On the other hand, they are more definite and more active. We have had in Germany for a long time a sort of striving after "superpersonal realities." The "individualist age" is a despised one. These young people live, in a growing and growingly extreme measure, in reaction against intellectualism and sophistication. At first the movement was romantically pantheist. Then it went over to ideas of a new "organic" or rational association with the superpersonal realities of state, society, people, stock, race, or class. Today all these ideological crutches are thrown aside, and the individual acknowledges the duty of absorption into the existing superpersonal reality of the new community of party, collectivity, state.

The overcoming of the "inner chaos," of the isolation of the individual—this smacks strongly of mere rhetoric. But it is more than that. It is the root of the idea of a "new man," a "new civilization," in which the tension between the individual and society is resolved in a new way. The young of all classes are filled with a longing for absorption into higher forms of communal life. That is the flight from isolation. It is almost a metaphysical feeling. It is not

merely the need for security and support, felt by the masses, who have the sense of being no longer strong enough to stand alone as individual personalities.

To us older people all this was familiar in an entirely different connection. We, too, were aware that the individual, in order to ripen into personality, cannot remain in isolation but must find the way to secular forms of integration in higher orders of society. But we knew, above all, that a form of integration in a higher, transcendental social order was necessary. For us the Christian religion was and is the indispensable element of strength by means of which the individual strives to rise into a truly "superpersonal reality."

You will see that a slight but immensely important shift could produce from this effort of our youth, which has been misdirected in our day to destruction and self-annihilation, a truly reforming effect—if the young could be given the revelation of the only superpersonal reality. Is that so difficult? Is it impossible? These young people are in search of the eternal, the superhuman, the super-experiential. What they have found thus far has been still in the sphere of experience, a transient element in history, a social, national element, changeable like everything else in history. It can never be absolute, the spirit of the people, or of class or race, or of progress. One day these young people will learn that they have attributed absoluteness to something of doubtful validity in order to escape from inner chaos. Are they not, then, nearer, even in their error, to the real truth of the necessity of a superpersonal order in

human life than we old and hard-boiled individualists and liberalists with all our lives centered in democratic freedom and in the arrogant assumption that we alone can represent democracy?

My dear friend, I have subjected you to this long course of theory in order to make it easier for you to understand why we, from conservative, and, indeed, genuinely Christian motives, supported these young people, readily and with all our hearts, in their search for a superpersonal reality and in their struggle against individualism. We, too, were no longer able to see in the self-isolation of the individual the sum total of man's spiritual and political existence.

If we want to win the youth over, we must try to speak their language. These young people were revolutionary and were determined to be so. Even if they were out to recover the ancient and eternal foundations of human civilization, and to experience the lost superpersonal reality of God, if they were in the highest sense conservative, their method was revolutionary. We had to accept their language. The restoration of the great Christian order could only be achieved—so it seemed to us—if these young people felt it to be the essence of their revolutionary objective. Here lies the germ of what we called, not, it must be admitted, very aptly, the “Conservative Revolution.”

THE CONSERVATIVE REVOLUTION

PERHAPS YOU ARE thinking of that memorable farce in Berlin, after the Nazis had come into power, when Vice-Chancellor von Papen whispered in a shy confidence to his visitors from up and down the country: "Hitler in power? The gentleman has been engaged, engaged by us: it is we who rule." The Nazis as auxiliaries of reaction: that, you are thinking, is the simple gist of my long-winded expositions. The brutal reality behind it all is, you think, the destruction of the rights of labor, the recovery of our lost mastery in our own house. And then rearmament and playing a bit with war. "We will get back what we have lost! War? Stick it, stick it!"

If that were true, my good friend, I might indeed have saved my ink. There are plenty of experts who will serve you up a story along those lines. Rather cheap lines, but plausible, because, of course, there is something in them.

In the years before the seizure of power, there was, it is true, in Germany a craftiness and a cult of political intrigue which were entirely unprecedented in our slow-going and, in the past, strictly correct nation. For foreigners, even for those with your own wide knowledge, it was almost

impossible to distinguish the play-acting on the front of the German stage from the real forces in the background.

There was that writer, Edgar J. Jung, whose great book¹ was the actual inspiration of my political life. A Catholic believer, an unquestionable Christian politician. Certainly no antidemocrat though he combated the French form of Western European parliamentarism as unsuitable for Germany. This Edgar J. Jung, whom the Nazis murdered on June 30, 1934, was von Papen's secretary and had drafted his Marburg speech for him. What do we know of Papen's own mind? If you met this man and imagined you were talking to the politician, you found you were in the presence of the political thinker concerned for the future of Christendom. If you wanted to talk to him about some Catholic issue, as I once tried to do, you might find at his desk facing you the elegant gentleman rider.

That Germany was certainly a witches' caldron. It was a *period of delirium*. Was it not Horace who used that expression for the last hundred years before the *pax Romana*, before the final stabilization of the *Imperium Romanum*? It was, and is, a time of travail in pregnancy. These are the pains of the birth of a new order; and, without immodesty, we may perhaps claim to have seen a peak of the promised land before you in this sheltered and, up to now, so fortunate country of England.

You want to learn more from me about the practical issues. You want me to picture to you the solutions I envisaged in Danzig—in a community small enough for a gen-

¹ *Die Herrschaft Der Minderwaertigen.*

eral survey, a sort of testing field, as I called it at the time. But let me, instead, say something more with reference to the conclusion of that letter wherein I spoke of the young Hugo von Hofmannsthal, the great Austrian writer. Only last night I was reading some of Stefan George's correspondence with him.

In an article on the German language that Austrian writer, who can no more be suspected of being a Prussian reactionary than I of being a Pan-German capitalist, wrote of the aspirations of the German youth: "It is not freedom that they seek but loyalties." Why loyalties? In order at last to gain character, at last to devise a spiritual imprint under which our nation will be at ease. The generations before us had carried their praises of individualism to excess. What we of the younger generation sought was allegiance to a whole; accepted loyalties, established standards. We sought responsibility to the world around us, we asked for an allotted place and service.

I come to that great passage of Hofmannsthal's which seems to me to be the deepest and most comprehensive of diagnoses of a possible future:

"We may fairly speak of it as a gradual and momentous process when we consider that it begins actually as a counter-movement to that intellectual upheaval of the sixteenth century which we call, in its two aspects, Renaissance and Reformation. The process of which I am speaking is nothing else than a Conservative Revolution, on such a scale as the history of Europe has never known."

End of the Revolution, Conservative Revolution, perhaps

Revolution of Reconstruction—call it what you will! We saw at that time a broad connection between the intellectual revolution since the Middle Ages, which has brought the human race such wealth of knowledge and ideas and material achievements, and the political revolution, the critical phases of which were marked by the French Revolution and the Russian Bolshevik one, with the dictatorship of the proletariat, and in which the whole political structure of the world seemed now being recast.

Beyond question, both sides of this one great revolution, which may justly be described as a process of human liberation, have had their salutary effects and will continue to have them. It is neither possible nor desirable that this revolutionary emancipation should be eliminated from the history of mankind. If, nevertheless, groups of us in all countries set ourselves against this revolutionary current, attempting to stem it, such primitive motives should not be imputed to us as a desire to return to the Middle Ages and to reintroduce moral and political serfdom.

Every revolution sets out to burst oppressive limitations. But the current of destruction introduced by the great secular movement of human emancipation is going far beyond the natural rhythm of destruction and rebuilding. Here it is no longer a question of relative destruction and losses but of absolute and irrecoverable sacrifices of the very nature of man, of the human qualities formed by the untold thousands of years of man's social existence.

The saving of these human qualities, now endangered and already almost destroyed, seemed to us to be the true

task of our time, not only in the field of politics, but, above all, in that of the mind and the spirit. For the ending of this great revolution, or a counter-revolution—today, with the destruction wrought by the Nihilist Revolution so plainly in evidence in German Nazism—it is easier to understand that a counter-movement is essential. Ten years ago things were seen in a different connection. National Socialism, or, rather, that which we associated with it, that which we meant to make it, seemed to us a possible instrument of that counter-movement, perhaps actually its political form. The things, on the contrary, which, to our opponents, stood for the essence of human history, for “progress,” for “enlightenment,” for “human liberation” from bondage to nature, tradition, and prejudices, seemed to us to be phases of that progressive nihilism. In them, man’s nature seemed once more to be going astray, and the very things for which our opponents claimed to be fighting, the liberation and progress and enlightenment, seemed to us to be turning in their hands into their antitheses: into total slavery, spiritual and material subjection.

It is difficult today to imagine the world without the experience of Nazism. This experience we naturally lacked ten years ago. That which today is seen to be the essence of Nazism seemed to us ten years ago to be the essence of the nihilism we were fighting. The fatally misleading, paradoxical illusion of that time was our belief that we must unite with a revolutionary element in order to attain the opposite of a revolution.

I am afraid that my interpretation of the Conservative

Revolution may have done little to explain to you the issues that mainly occupied our thoughts ten years ago. But there was yet another side to our resolve to attempt to work with Nazism. You very rightly surmise that one element which contributed to that resolve was a process we may describe as the rise of intermediate political groups, of new men grouped into new "elites."

Germany was not the only country in which a new grouping of political elements took place. In the last years, before the Nazi seizure of power, groups of younger men, with no party affiliation, came to the fore. They seemed capable of serving in the rejuvenation of political life. The political groups at the head of affairs seemed to be at the end of their usefulness. They were rarely able to get away from established routine and the well-worn tracks of their policy. They had no new men to offer. It was largely the necessity of getting right away from obsolete issues that brought the new elements to the front. They made their appearance both among Conservatives and Socialists.

At first these elements were not Nazis at all but men of independence, who saw the inadequacy and unsatisfactoriness of existing party groups and were in search of new ones. This was liable to lead, and did lead, to some new groupings which numerically were insignificant. It was capable, however, also of producing a rejuvenation of *all* parties, if these were wise enough to admit the new elements, not simply in order to corrupt and muzzle them with the gift of party or official posts, but to give them a real opportunity of influence and activity.

Here the normal struggle between the generations was accentuated behind the scenes. More was involved than the mere determination of the old party placeholders to abandon none of their influence to younger elements. What was at issue was the complete change of all political life rendered necessary by the entry on the scene of the new features of a changed world. It was not a question of persons, of ambitious groups, but of the necessity of recognizing the truly vital issues and of seeking a solution for them. This process was at work in Germany in 1930-1932; it reached other countries in 1937-1939, and in a few it is still in progress. Some countries may have succeeded in giving admittance to new elements; most have not yet done so. Germany had not. The result was that many men of ideas and energy went over to Nazism, seeing in it the only possible field of active usefulness.

The teaching of all history could only be that Nazism, once in power, would be mellowed by responsibility for the state. Thus the thing most needed was to assist that process and to introduce into Nazism the elements that would contribute to that mellowing—young and intelligent men with a record of solid achievement and minds unwarped by the party mechanism. Have the spokesmen of the old parties any right to cavil at that process? Why did they not open their own ranks to the younger element? Instead of that, they did their best to gag them as troublesome and litigious outsiders. May I be permitted a small personal digression? I came into politics from the agrarian side. It was because my criticisms were felt to be trouble-

some that one of the reactionary, pseudo-conservative politicians of the German Nationalist party offered me a well-paid post in order to bring me to heel. It was that offer that decided me to overcome my dislike of Nazism, so that I went straight from this Danzig senator to the Nazi party offices to join the party.

Who was there who had the means of diverting an approaching world revolution by timely reforms into the path of evolution? It is not from the revolutionary elements of a dawning new age that discretion is to be expected. It is for the elements of continuous advance to provide that. It is from the elements in power that not only insight but foresight must be demanded in regard to the existing things that call for reform and the coming things that deserve admittance.

Everywhere we may find what may be called the regime of elderly statesmen. It is possible to belong to that species at thirty years of age. This regime of elderly statesmen is not confined to any particular class of society. It is just as popular in trade unions and in Socialist parties as in industrial companies, government departments, and legal circles. It is that system of "well-earned privileges" for the men who "belong," of cliques into which there is no entry save by marriage, by favor, or by industrious bowing and scraping. It is a regime of sterility posturing as experience and dullness posing as caution. There are men who have been openly set in high places in contempt of the interests of whole nations, men who have a villager's suspicion of the unfamiliar. There are old ministers or other men of long

service who have to be found high places as a sort of guests of honor, even if every office is filled already. There are men who retain their posts as their personal right like a canoness in a home for old ladies. Vacant positions go to those who have been longest on the waiting list. It might seem incredible, and yet it is true, that this old Europe is perhaps going to ruin because a select company of sterile though highly respectable men have been holding the principal posts in all countries, as unchallenged in their occupation of them as a ticket holder in his deck chair on a Sunday afternoon in Kensington Gardens.

It is only now, I think, in the midst of the stress of the war, that it is understood in this country what it was that induced us outsiders—with no part in the activities of the political market place and yet with a full share of the public destinies those activities controlled and with the intelligence to see the connection—to brand the whole system of party traffic as rule by “elderly statesmen,” to regard it as behind the times and due for scrapping, and to call for the new method of factual instead of partisan consideration. Was there not an optimum solution for every problem, which could be discovered by the examination of the facts? What was the use of this obscurantist vaporizing in the service of party ideologies and interests, and around each particular problem? We must approach the problems of state administration and economic needs and social tensions as the engineer approaches his technical problems. For each problem there is its own specific rational solution—so it

seemed to us then. Was not the thing that was needed, then, the factualization of politics?

What else did this mean than calling in the "experts"? What did it mean but giving the heads of the executive departments more influence over and against the parties? Had not the great industrialists long pursued this path? They and their boards of directors had long left the real control to their executive officials. This line of advance was, moreover, in harmony with certain German inclinations. Did it not mean setting up a new authority, replacing the regime of political amateurs by the system of management by experts? Was not an "enlightened" authority of this new sort the only thing which, in such critical times, could prevent disaster?

There was another point. In Soviet Russia a system had been introduced which might be described as technocracy. In Germany, too, the class of men who had had a training, who had acquired a thorough, detailed knowledge of something, felt their superiority to all the politicians, who had no more than a half-knowledge of everything, but had, on the other hand, the gift of talking about it all, and with whom, for no better reason than this, the decisions lay. Ernst Jünger, an extremist in spirit, with a passion for thinking things out to their remotest logical implications, saw the inescapable logic of our situation in the impossibility of mastering our problems unless they were attacked with the exactitude developed by the applied sciences. There was no longer room for political discussion, only for a plan of work. Decisions must no longer be left to the

political conflict of wills; all that was needed was for each one to deal with his allotted task.

Strange that this man should have come from the Right, from the Nationalists, and should have found a number of supporters on the Right Wing, although what he described was the rationally elaborated method which Soviet Russia was the first to put into practice and which Nazi Germany had subsequently carried further. This extreme application of the methods of technology to political and social life had certainly nothing conservative about it. It was radically revolutionary, and aimed at the removal of the last vestiges of a tradition and of historic continuity. But, in its first aims and its first steps, this radicalism was entirely compatible with an effort to set up a new authoritarian state that would relegate the parties to the harmless field of questions of minor importance and restrict them to advisory functions.

I have mentioned this line of thought because at times of emergency, when rapid action is essential and when difficult new problems arise, it is bound to suggest itself in other countries. Away with parties and partisanship! Parties are obsolete; factual consideration can alone save us. In all sorts of quarters, with all sorts of differing outlooks, this was the quintessence drawn from our actual experience in the years before the Nazi seizure of power.

But where was the new factuality to be found? Did it really exist among the experts and officials? Were the executive authorities really in a position to lead a state, particularly at times of emergency? The experts very soon proved

to be the most unteachable and most unprofitable of colleagues, obsessed with their special outlook and itching to cure the world from one single standpoint, their own. Experts become the greatest obstacles to decisions as soon as broad enterprises are in question, enterprises in which the decisions are necessarily dependent on more than one factor. Is it, indeed, possible at all to find purely rational solutions for political and economic problems? Does not the error in planning lie in the fact that the vitally important is always an irrational element and that there is no infallible way of integrating this irrational element in a rational solution?

Without dwelling on such philosophical questions, and speaking in entirely practical terms, is there anything more disappointing, indeed, more helpless, than the "experts," when they are presented with big general problems? Can the official, however intelligent, however well informed and well intentioned, be preserved from the effects of his aloofness from real problems, his paper existence in an abstract world? If experts are allowed the power of decision on anything that is not strictly within their province, they become the most obstinate and unteachable of politicians. Officials are the slowest and most nervous of all leaders.

There is no progress to be made along that path. A world out of joint is not to be set right by the capitulation of the political leaders to the experts and bureaucrats. Is it not best after all to leave things as they are? If the judgment of the free and independent man, of the amateur in the best sense of the word (and the politician is an amateur in rela-

tion to technical problems), is indispensable, does not that settle the matter?

That was not the conclusion we drew. There must be an authority standing above experts and officials, with full liberty of initiative and decision, an authority possessing the sureness of instinct and the freedom of judgment which we find in the best politicians. This authority must, however, be free from everything that stamps the politician as a party man, free from representation of the special interests of an economic group or a class or an ideological movement. Is it not possible, then, to create a party which shall represent the nation as a whole, shall represent all its interests? Can we not emerge from the party state, without sacrificing that great achievement of democracy, an independent authority controlling the institutions of state and society?

That was the path along which we came to the Single Party; it was that which made National Socialism appear to us to be not entirely repulsive and which suggested to us that it might contain material which could be so shaped as in the end to provide us with a really practicable new solution. It was a mistake, and indeed, a fatal one.

But was it so reprehensible or even so stupid as it is usually represented in democratic quarters?

IV

THE TESTING FIELD

I WILL DO as you ask and try to provide a few glimpses of our practical work. But do not grow impatient if now I go rather too much into detail. The moment we come to the practical work it is the detail that matters. Broad sketches are easy, but they are not enough.

Danzig, small though it was, was an excellent testing field for the new ideas we had formed about the possibilities of achieving a new political and social order. Visitors to Danzig from abroad were astonished, not only at the complicated nature of our special circumstances, but at the fact that we had to battle as best we could, on a small scale, with all the problems of the great states. You will remember that the Free State of Danzig was an independent state under the supervision of the League of Nations, with certain limitations of sovereignty, and in a customs union with Poland. Poland had rights in the port and certain other special privileges. The customs union which had been imposed on us involved difficulties because our standard of living was higher, and our whole trade and industry worked with higher overhead costs than in Poland. We had our own currency. For the rest, in population and area we were

not the smallest of the European states; we exceeded Luxembourg, for instance, in both. But we were probably the poorest and the most artificial of the states of Europe. Our agriculture, it may be mentioned, had been among the best, the most intensive, and, both in breeding and in tillage, the most progressive of the former German Empire.

We had to battle with all the difficulties of the German Reich and with others of our own. Two things, however, we were spared: the necessity of making special efforts for rearmament and the necessity which that involved of interfering with the natural course of economic policy. There was, moreover, nothing to be gained by making Danzig economically self-sufficient. Our policy, on the contrary, was to remove economic barriers where this could be done without weakening our own production. Our aim was the exact opposite of that of the Germans—not to close the frontiers, but gradually to adapt our trade and industry to a larger economic area. In foreign policy our mission was simply to bridge over existing differences and to discover new and practicable paths to permanent co-operation.

I had, for instance, been in advance of the German Minister of Food, Herr Darre, in issuing marketing regulations for the farmers and the dealers in agricultural produce. These regulations of ours aimed, however, at the gradual and careful adjustment of Danzig farming to the Polish hinterland, with its much smaller capital resources and lower wages—an adjustment that aimed at enabling Danzig farms to maintain their intensive production. Thus I see in these undertakings of mine a preliminary experiment

which will probably have to be repeated on a large scale after the war, when great unified economic regions have to be organized in Europe, and on more than a European scale, while avoiding an uneconomic adjustment of more highly organized regions to regions of extensive agriculture employing little capital.

A few years later in Paris I had an opportunity of seeing how little such measures had to do with theoretical and doctrinaire ideas as to what is democratic or undemocratic, liberal or "direct management," when I read the statutes of a fisheries corporation. These were issued in 1933. Two years earlier I had created almost exactly the same type of institution to reduce fisheries competition in Danzig waters and to prevent the destruction of fishery products or their sale at ruinous prices.

Everything we undertook there in Danzig took a different direction from the German—not away from democracy, but actually in the direction of revitalizing democracy; not toward an artificial "autarchy," but toward the overcoming of artificial economic barriers and the impediments of state protectionism and state control. We believed that we could make this possible by introducing statutory self-governing economic organizations, which we considered would be capable of reducing the pressure of competition without too much administrative tutelage. Our economic aim was to work for the formation of great economic areas while safeguarding our own economic resources. In foreign policy we had tried to clear away contentious issues which were of importance only so long as each of the two states con-

cerned, Poland and Danzig, regarded them as means of weakening its rival, and which became meaningless as soon as there was readiness on both sides for genuine and effective co-operation. The proper aim of our foreign policy was the rendering invisible of political frontiers which could not be changed without resort to war. (During my period of office as president I published an article on this problem in the *Danziger Neueste Nachrichten*, in which I defined our aim as a "sterilization of the frontiers"—that is to say, a removal of the poisonous germs. The article aroused suspicion on both sides, not only among the Nazis, but among the Poles. It seems to me only fair to recognize that the will to real co-operation was not always lacking solely among the Germans.)

You will reply that you are unable to see any connection between the efforts here mentioned and an alliance with the Nazis. After all, in spite of your intimate knowledge of Germany, you fail to recognize a characteristic German quality, that of schematic thinking. Our thinking has always proceeded in some way from theories, and in our practical activities we try always to be "true to program." It is, perhaps, only in Germany that the charge against an otherwise practicable measure of being "inconsistent with program" can be fatal. It is difficult in Germany to consider practical proposals simply from their practical aspect. They are immediately classified in relation to an existing program and rejected or accepted accordingly. This habit adds considerably to the difficulties of our political life. The Frenchman, for instance, who set up the fishery corporation just

mentioned, as a practical remedy for practical difficulties, is unlikely to have devoted much thought to the question of whether he was acting in kind with the theoretical principles of neo-corporativism. Among us, however, the mere suggestion of such an institution would be enough to stamp the proposer for all time as a partisan of the corporative system and therefore of Fascism, an enemy of democracy, and so on.

In your country, there was a thorough inquiry into the question of the devaluation of the pound sterling. A royal commission was appointed to consider the question. There were many arguments both for and against the step. They were weighed against one another. Among us a question of that sort produces at once a sacred and passionately defended article of faith by which, according to the standpoint taken up, the whole moral order of the world stands or falls. I remember my first proposal to devalue the Danzig florin, the parity of which with the Polish zloty was simply grotesque in view of the circumstance that we shared a unified customs area with Poland. The bank director to whom I made the suggestion, a man usually of perfect self-control, almost spat at me—never should such a thing happen unless over his dead body! That was, at all events, the sense of his argument, which ended with an expression of deep moral disgust with the bankrupt farmers.

Only as a Nazi, at all events only as a man with new political forces at his back, could anyone attempt such a new start as we then attempted. That is the intrinsic connection between such a program and the new force in the

political arena. With the old parties, unalterably fixed in their views and holding fast to their scheme of things, you would have little chance of getting past their mental limitations with any new and unorthodox solution. The whole of the German parties were engaged incessantly in jumping over their own shadows—a grotesque and tragic dance.

There was, for example, our third problem, of ending the class struggle by creating self-governing institutions of social service, to be administered by all occupational grades—employers, “black-coated” employees, and workers. The idea could not possibly have been carried into practice before the coming of the Nazis. For the class war was the supreme myth of nineteenth-century socialism. How could it have been abandoned without socialism in its existing form giving up the ghost? And even for Conservatives and Liberals the idea of the assembling of the three classes as equal partners would have been an inconceivable invasion of the master-in-his-own-house principle. The employed person might have an apparent right of joint decision in the bodies representing the great industrial occupations, but never an effective one. Any real abolition of the class war remained a utopian aspiration of ideologues. Why was this? The answer to that question will decide the fate of democracy. I do not know whether it will prove possible to produce equilibrium between class interests. But without that equilibrium it will be as impossible for democracy to function as without a future equilibrium between national interests.

We may condemn Nazism, but if we do we must at

least distinguish between what it has actually become and what is was intended to be and might have been. There has never been a political force in Germany that had such opportunities. I regarded it as my duty to develop Nazism in Danzig into what Nazism would have had to become in order to be the real renovating force in the political life, not only of Germany, but of all Europe. This is no *ex post facto* interpretation. I tried at the time to make it clear to more than one foreign correspondent that in Danzig the evidence had, as it were, to be produced of the "European aspect" of Nazism. My last speech was devoted to my own conception of a genuine form of National Socialism, such as German patriots and good Europeans hoped to see. (It was a speech to members of German groups abroad. It very quickly found its way to Hitler's Deputy, Hess, and played a part as evidence of my traitorous attitude.)

Do not lose patience if I enter now upon two or three questions of detail. When we took over the government of Danzig the economic and political conditions were desolating. Immediate economic measures were necessary. An immediate relief of the tension in foreign affairs was essential if war was to be averted. After these immediate steps it would be possible to proceed to the systematic construction of a new and permanent order. Here in Danzig we could not do what we considered necessary simply by virtue of "revolutionary right," by means of a dictatorship. A new order could not be imposed from without. It must be developed from within. It must have the approval of the statutory two-thirds majority of our citizens and must have

the assent of the League of Nations Council. A long and difficult path. The immediate steps were concerned with the abolition of unemployment and the encouragement of initiative in private trade and industry. Public provision of employment was necessary. Trade and industry must be furnished with cheap credit, and the burden of debt must be lifted off the shoulders of certain sections of the population, such as the property owners and the farmers, by the conversion of short-term credits into long-term loans. The political hindrances to a normal exchange of goods with Poland had to be got rid of. We must come down from our high currency parity and secure admission to the sterling bloc. The adjustment to the Polish economic area and the world market must be so effected as not to make whole branches of industry, such as agriculture, unable to compete.

Important public works (road building, land reclamation, and the development of sources of power); cheap short-term credits for new work in certain key industries—for house repairs, new building, and housing estates; measures for debt relief, for regulation of markets and promotion of sales, and for the nursing of new economic enterprises (such as the fur industry, the electrical trades, tramp shipping, certain finishing industries, precision industries, etc.) which were not adequately represented in Poland—that is to say, expansion of the private economic potential to meet the needs of the joint customs area: these were some of the requirements I tried to meet in my capacity of senator for economic affairs and agriculture.

The expansion of credit was one of the chief elements in the carrying out of this program. We set up a special state bank for the provision of credit. How far could this expansion of credit go without having the effect of inflation? The limit could not be theoretically fixed. It was dependent on confidence and on a sort of disciplining of buyers. It could be very elastic so soon as discipline was maintained and prices were kept from soaring. I worked in collaboration with a very able and intelligent currency specialist with whom I was united in a common criticism of vulgar Nazism and in the determination to get through this period of revolutionary Nazism as quickly as possible. This currency and banking specialist would have been perfectly capable, in more favorable circumstances, of staving off any inflationist effects for a long time. Unfortunately he was one of those many German liberals who capitulated to Nazidom at the very moment when they should have stood out for their own convictions.

I do not think that the credit expansion we proposed, within the limits we had in view, would have had any inflationary effect. It was necessary in any case that we should envisage sooner or later the devaluation of the Danzig florin to the level of the Polish zloty. As a component part of our program, this measure was capable of exerting a stimulating instead of a destructive influence on our trade and industry. I am convinced, moreover, that Dr. Schacht's moves in this direction would have worked perfectly and shown the orthodox currency experts to be mistaken if Schacht had not been compelled to overstep the permissible limit in granting

credits. Many things could be achieved through the party's strong disciplining which without it might have ended disastrously. I do not want for a moment at this initial stage to speak of terrorism. National and social discipline, based on voluntary acquiescence, could achieve the same ends without overt compulsion. It is a question of setting in motion the elements of this voluntary discipline and keeping them at work. In the Weimar Germany that would have been a vain enterprise. That was why Brüning had to take up such a cautious attitude to everything in the way of credit inflation. Our situation was less difficult. This was, indeed, one of the motives for making use of Nazism as an organ of self-discipline.

I will not burden you with further detail. Our first efforts could only be directed to letting in fresh air. The actual tasks would come later. No one could seriously suppose that these economic expedients would alone suffice to produce the famous boomward start of a new trade "cycle," after which everything would go swimmingly.

We, at all events, did not imagine that things were as simple as that. Much deeper structural changes were needed. I think I have said enough on that point. To return to the three great tasks, which I tried to formulate in an earlier letter, we could not hope to make trade crisis-proof and to make an end of unemployment for all time without far-reaching legislative measures: that is to say, without institutional safeguards. Just as civil liberty, the equality of all before the law, secured its safeguards only in the course of long political struggles, so these new fundamental rights,

which certainly involved heavy burdens and sacrifices from the community, had to fight for their institutions. An extension of the general insurance against want and sickness, together with the right to work and to a minimum standard of existence and with a safeguarding of trade and industry from periodical crises—all this seemed utopian, and was revolutionary. It brought us the title of National Bolsheviks from the German National and Liberal parties, and charges of unfair competition from the Marxist Socialists, who regarded us as amateurs and visionaries.

But I ask you to consider this: here in England there are great liberals whose liberalism is beyond question but who are very seriously asking themselves whether the age of vastly expanding trade is not past, and whether we did not owe the immense advantages of free trade in the nineteenth century to unique conditions which no longer exist. I will not pursue this idea; you are familiar enough with it. Let us dismiss the question how far such reflections are well grounded or not. We, too, entertained them, and we cannot be blamed for doing so. Perhaps it is necessary to have lived through all the storms of this critical time as an independent businessman or a worker continually in danger of finding himself without employment, a person without the security of a permanent salaried position, in order to have had physical experience of the reality of these problems.

We believed that we could carry out the institutional safeguarding of the new social rights and the institutional provision of mutual assistance for the removal of crises by means of statutory self-governing bodies. These were en-

visaged, not as departments of the state machinery of administration, but as organs, as I wrote, of mutual help, to be under state supervision but to have as much independence as possible. I devoted a great deal of time and attention to the statutes of these new corporations. They were certainly not perfect legislative efforts; in the nature of things they could not be.

In regard to the social services—provision for old age, for medical treatment, for sickness insurance, and for insurance against unemployment—extension was needed in two directions. These services must be extended to social groups which in the past had not been included in them. Independent artisans, craftsmen, and farmers, for instance, were often in worse circumstances than workers and employees. If they went bankrupt, they were very liable to fall into the ranks of the destitute, while having no claim to receive, or prospect of receiving, the slightest public assistance. Voluntary insurance was no substitute for a corporative system because it was always dropped at times of stress. Apart from this, increased benefits could only be secured by increasing the scope of the schemes to cover an increased number of the persons gainfully employed.

There were other social services to consider—housing, educational grants, and loan and saving banks. There were cultural questions—sport, travel, holidays, and others. For all these purposes it was necessary to set up organs of mutual help. The state had to encourage their formation, to support them, and to supervise them. But they must remain in the hands of those concerned, must be mainly de-

pendent on the contributions from members, and must be institutions of ordered mutual help under the inspection of their own representatives. It seemed useful to associate many of these new organs with the representative bodies of economic self-government. This was not, however, actually necessary.

So there came into existence chambers, or professional associations or corporations, in which representatives of employers, employees, and workers worked together in the administration of the general interests of their trade or profession, and in that of the organizations for individual and general social and economic assistance. Each category had also its own separate representative groups, dealing each with its own special interests and problems. The institutions for social services were connected together in two ways. They were drawn each from its own trade or profession, but they were also grouped together, according to their fields of activity, into great associations, and were supported by special central institutions, from which they received expert advice. These central institutions, supervising bodies, and account organizations were for the whole territory.

As organs of representation of economic interests, the chambers were, within their authorized fields of activity, the organs of conciliation of interests between employers and employed on questions of wages and piece-work rates and everything connected therewith. They were also, and especially, the mediums of measures of economic policy to bring economic recovery to their trades. It would carry us

too far to go in any detail into regulations, some of them difficult and complicated; they would only become intelligible if we could give concrete examples.

The weaknesses even of a genuine corporativism soon became clear to me. There was the intrinsic weakness that these were artificially created bodies, instead of growing naturally out of existing organs like the trade unions with their institutions; but their chief weaknesses lay in their complication and their slow movement. Everywhere, too, the tendency revealed itself to suppress competition at the cost of the purchaser. The margin of profit grew. Grave cases of profiteering occurred. I am no longer convinced that a new legislative framework for economic life and social services can be created on these lines. It is *possible* for such corporations to provide a satisfactory solution of some problems, but they offer no universally applicable plan. We were certainly going too far in attempting to devise one. Yet—no mistakes, no experience. Often it will be sufficient to expand the existing legislative framework, leaving private initiative and free competition to fulfill within it their simply indispensable function.

I have touched on these experiments because, at a certain stage in economic and social crises, such corporations almost force themselves upon us as the one means of amelioration, if a system of total and compulsory planning, with state control of production and consumption, is not to be introduced. In any case, my legislative work soon came to a standstill. I had my first big conflict with Nazism over it, a conflict which nearly ended with my resignation

a year before it actually took place. If there was any sound conception underlying the plan, it was that of the two elements of mutual help and self-administration. The moment these two fundamental elements were removed or interfered with, there resulted a fatal over-bureaucratization of economic processes and of the social institutions. That very demand was made by the Nazis, though one of the points of their program was a system of occupational representation. Like the Fascists, they regarded the corporation as simply a means of subjecting economic life to the state and of exploiting the social services as instruments for the control of the masses. The corporation served to integrate trade and industry in the state instead of leaving them as spheres of free individual existence. They were turned into effectual instruments of the modern system of state control. With such ideas of corporativism I never had anything to do.

The controversy that broke out between us began characteristically over the question whether the chairmen and leaders should be appointed by the state or elected by their members. The Nazi principle was to restrict the sphere of free elections as narrowly as possible, and ultimately to make an end of it. Finding this insisted on, I broke off work on the subject. Nearly a year later there emerged a thoroughly mutilated system of industrial chambers with nothing left in them to show that what had been sought was a new social and economic order.

I had to give way also over my plan of putting new life into the system of local self-government, which offered great opportunities, at least in the country districts. Instead

this system fell entirely into the hands of the party, losing the last vestiges of autonomy. It was pushed back a hundred years. In foreign policy, on the other hand, certain initiatives in the direction of co-operation might have born fruit.

I must add a few words about my relations with Poland. In 1929 I had published a book¹ describing the Polish policy of the first ten years after the Versailles Treaty, particularly the measures directed against the German population. These were exceptional at that time. Today, when compared with Nazi methods, they may be regarded as gentle and humane. Those were, at all events, different times. These measures were taken under the auspices of a liberal and democratic order in Europe, under the League of Nations. The Polish people are among the most intelligent, charming, and valuable members of the family of European nations. Poland has, however, like every nation, the defects of her virtues. She had, moreover, passed through her time of national suffering, which had accentuated nationalism. Anyone who appreciated the Poles—and I personally admit a deep sympathy for them, resulting from personal and intellectual intercourse—could not but note with regret the development after the last war.

There were two things that stood in the way of a broadly based understanding with Poland—that process of oppressing the German element in the country, and the question of the Corridor. There was only one way out of the dilemma of these questions without war: a postponement of

¹ *Die Entdeutschung Westpreußens und Posens.*

the settlement and an effort to see meanwhile whether a disastrous solution could be averted by means of permanent co-operation. Perhaps this insoluble problem might actually yield the compulsion for a sort of symbiosis.

The two nations have historic and ethnographic claims in many cases to the same territories. Here is one of the most obvious examples of the impossibility of ever attaining a stable order in Europe on the basis of the historic European nationalism and national democracy.

The creation of a federative order in the center and the near east of Europe—for that is what was at issue in what has just been referred to—seemed to us to be the great political aim of the future. Not in the sense implied by State Secretary Keppler, by conquest and Germanization, but by the mutual protection of independent national elements. The tendency today will be to see in this planning of a federative order, with Germany as its center, the great danger of the institution, by peaceful means, of a German hegemony. It may be that intentions of that sort were entertained by some of the opponents of Nazism, who approved its aims but not its methods. My friends and I, however, proceeded from sincerely held conceptions of a just and peaceful order. This was our objective if only for the simple reason that the maintenance of overlordship over a number of associated nations is bound to be equally precarious whether they have been reduced to subjection by peaceful means or by armed force. Permanence can result only from the voluntary nature of the association and the common advantage accruing to the participants. The example we

had before our eyes was the Commonwealth of the British Empire, in which we found once more many important features of the history of our own ancient empire. This was our motive in accepting the idea of a "Third Reich," an idea which was simply usurped and distorted by Nazism. The idea was developed, though on rather different lines, by one of the oldest of our Young Conservatives, Moeller von den Bruck.

We followed in some measure the example of the French policy after 1871. Bismarck pursued a more generous and broad-minded policy than that of the League Powers in the ten years after Versailles: with his approval France built up her great colonial empire. Bismarck repeatedly stated why he offered no opposition to that effort at a new equilibrium but encouraged it. Our similar effort aimed at no claim to dominion but at the guarantee of a great and lasting peace. To that extent the comparison with France is misleading. I hope you will not interpret what I have said as implying that we had any intention of turning central Europe into a colonial empire for Germany. Everything that was planned at that time (with better intentions and a better chance of permanent results than the plans that are now re-emerging for artificial systems of pacts centering on Germany) is compromised today by Hitler. Under the same name he has brought into existence the antithesis of a reasonable order—an empire based on dominion over subjugated nations.

The fundamental requirement of a great common order of the central European nations, in which the German na-

tion would have had to play a sort of leading part, should have been that the Slavs of that region (to speak in popular language) should feel at home in it, should feel it to be their own order. The leading power, which at first would form the nucleus of the order and would act as its trustee, should therefore seek in such an order not so much its own advantage as that of the secondary nations to be brought in. The advantages would then very quickly accrue also to the German nation. Thus, what was wanted was a sort of large-scale preparatory activity, not only for the improvement of the political atmosphere, but for the laying down of a practical basis for co-operation. I had definite ideas of the conditions for such effective co-operation—not merely spectacular co-operation of the sort so much talked about to so little purpose in the League. I do not complain of not being understood. Such a policy was only to be achieved step by step against determined resistance from all sides. I am only unable to see any reason for self-righteousness on the part of Social Democrats, Liberals, and members of the Center party in their attitude to the nationalism of the German Nationalists. I have, in any case, found a readier sympathy for such ideas among so-called conservative *Stockpreussen*—“out-and-out Prussians”—than among members of parties which in the matter of national feeling always suffered from a sort of inferiority complex and sought to demonstrate to their political opponents that they, too, were good Germans.

The suspicion of us Germans had to be overcome. A difficult task indeed, and one which was not to be achieved

in two or three years or with two or three treaties. But what opportunities there were for such a policy, instead of a policy of turning toward Soviet Russia! Once in an address to a Danzig-Polish society which I had founded I deliberately raised the question of the future Pan-Slavism. I can still see that scene—my visitors from Warsaw smiling surreptitiously to one another at my expense. Today I imagine this question no longer seems so absurd to them. It is of fundamental importance to the future—the question, that is to say, whether the western Slavs will be able to remain within a western European field of influence or will be brought within an eastern European and Asiatic one. Instead of either solution there then existed the intermediate one, which would have been of service to all concerned, of forming a central European field of influence of their own.

At a meeting of Danzig lawyers, before I took office as president and before Hitler made his sensational *volte-face* in starting a policy of friendship with Poland, I tried to show that Germany had only one means of regaining her position as one of the leading nations of the world: she must become the standard-bearer of a new idea of right. This idea of right must include a supernational order and a system of concrete rights for minorities, and must enable Germany to become the trustee of a federation of states to be formed. I earned no thanks from these lawyers, only their indignation.

I need not write to you about my practical efforts in foreign policy. You have ample detail available in my publications. I did my best to get rid of suspicion. One day the

then Polish Minister, Mr. Papee, came to see me. There had been fresh incidents. After fulfilling his official mission he put to me the personal and confidential question: what were Germany's real intentions, what were the Nazis plans? He put the question as from man to man. I felt compelled to reply that I did not know. I did indeed no longer know. I could only give him, I said, my word that if a disingenuous policy were to be pursued I would have nothing to do with it, but would resign. I kept my word. Colonel Beck, however, was playing for bigger stakes.

I came long ago to the conviction that at such times of historic crisis the usual methods of astuteness and political tacticianship are utterly unprofitable. The only thing that can be of service is simple human decency.

THE GERMAN REVOLUTION

LET ME RETURN to the subject of our recent talk, the German Revolution. I mentioned to you that excellent book by Professor Vermeil,¹ of the Sorbonne, on the doctrinaires of that revolution. Observing the revolution from outside, but with the knowledge of the lessons of the great French Revolution, Vermeil sees related elements where we feel only the contrasts and a complete absence of any common element. Why Nazi? I think I can give a decidedly shorter answer to the question than six months ago. In our opposition to the Weimar Republic we were combating the very thing that brought France to disaster this summer.

Is that plain? I am afraid you will consider that I am finding an interconnection where there is none. I can see well enough the differences between the young German democracy and the French one, grown skeptical and stuck fast in its own mental routine. Yet there was a resemblance between the essential features in the two countries. There was the same incapacity to see the real problems, or if they were noticed to attack them in time by adequate means. Is it in the nature of democracy to fail to recognize dangers in time and to attack them by inadequate means? If so, de-

¹ *L'Allemagne du Congrès de Vienne à la révolution hitlérienne.*

mocracy could be no more than a fine-weather form of rule.

It is not so. There have been democratic regimes which have known how to act with all possible human foresight, in good time, and with effect. The incapacity to recognize dangers and to attack them in time must have other causes. One is obvious. It is the personal shortcomings of a body of political leaders which was not the result of the selection of the best and fittest to serve but, in many cases, of the elimination of men with the needed independence of judgment. The other cause lies deeper. It lies in lack of confidence in face of the elements of coming change. Democracy on the Continent has been living up to now in an age that no longer exists. It was backward-looking in its ideas and its political methods. It was living in the nineteenth century. Its very language had been learned from the nineteenth century and was a relic, with its rhetoric and its emotionality, of a period of rule by men of social eminence which has long passed away. It was a juggling with effete phrases and faded sentiments. But everything that has given our twentieth century its new vitality, its new and cruel but very effectual qualities, was ignored; left to vibrate only in the brutal speeches of a new type of opposition from the extreme Left or the extreme Right. The democracy of notabilities tried to take no notice of it as it would ignore the social slips of an upstart.

To defend freedom against barbarism and tyranny—it is a fine phrase, a fine aim. But were not the Germans of 1929-1930 and the years that followed in process of exchanging

political freedom, with the aid of a socialization of the total indebtedness of the country, for a universal dependence on the state? Did not this course lead in the end to state totalitarianism and to democracy's disappearance through its own act? The defense of freedom calls for more than good will. All these men who brought democracy to manifest and universal collapse were certainly not lacking in good will. What they lacked was foresight and the recognition that the *institutional safeguards* of freedom change with the times. There is no unique and final form of democratic freedom. Each age must seek the suitable institutions for the protection of that freedom.

But a good proportion of those democrats who make such a show of loyalty to the cause of freedom have long abandoned it in their minds as a lost cause. These are the half-hearted and the skeptical defenders of democracy: those who already have one foot in the camp of the new absolutism of the collectivist state and who have done more harm to the cause of freedom than all those who discussed the authoritarian regime and corporations or attacked liberalism as a sort of scapegoat for everything that went wrong. In their skepticism they prevented anything's being done. They had nothing better to do than other dying regimes—they appeased and deferred and went in search of petty expedients and half measures, and acted on the lines of every incompetent bureaucracy—they put off action until it was too late for any decision to be of service until the matter was closed and the papers could be filed away.

What can democracy and democratic freedom be in the

age of the mass collectivity, the age of a weapon so powerful that any political group which can get it into its hands becomes the absolute lord over state and democracy? Are not these two factors, mass and elite, enough in themselves to make all democracy illusory in this twentieth century? How is the temptation to be met that may seduce one or another political group into using any favorable opportunity to convert the trust of administration of power into its own impregnable hold over power? Is that a temptation that is confined to the Right Wing, to reactionaries, discontented army officers, and big industrialists? Is its geographical extension confined to Germany—are there not very audible declarations in other countries that the positions of power won are certainly not going to be abandoned?

The whole working of democracy is crippled. Is there any guarantee left that the rules of the game will be observed by an outvoted government? Why should it observe them and resign, why submit to that self-discipline, when there is a danger that, once the opposition attains power, it will itself hold on to power in a similar situation? This introduces a temptation which might be called that of the race for a *coup d'état*.

The validity of the democratic rules of play depends on two factors, which now, in many countries, no longer exist. One is their voluntary acceptance under a common democratic ethic. This perhaps exists now only in the Anglo-Saxon countries, in Switzerland, and in a few minor European states. The other factor consists of a counterpoise to the central power in the form of autonomous or indirect

authorities which make difficult or impossible a centralization of the resources of power.

Modern rationalization steadily tightens up centralization, and the control of the central machine strengthens the tendency to a new absolutism. So long as a common democratic ethic existed, the temptation to a *coup d'état* was prevented from taking root. So long as there were autonomous bodies that had a share in governmental and social power, there were great difficulties in the way of a *coup*. But since there have been in existence political groups that are out to make an end of the bourgeois social order and to enforce a new form of society with the aid of a propagandist and punitive dictatorship; since, especially, groups have existed that have broken away from the ethical basis of a positive or, at least secularized, Christian humanism, there has been an acute danger in every democratic state that one political group may steal a march on the rest by attaining power by constitutional parliamentary means, by securing a majority at the elections; but may then refuse absolutely to give it up at any time. The centralized modern state with its great bureaucratic organization provides the conditions for this sort of revolution in cold blood.

In Germany the temptation to face the country with a *fait accompli* was greater than in any other state. It would be unfair to charge only the nationalist *Junkers* and reactionaries with inclination to act in that way; the temptation to sacrifice democratic liberties was at least as strongly felt among the political Left-wing groups, though not among the leading Social Democrats. Behind the older ranks

of reliable and proven men with authority still undiminished, there were younger, active groups, attuned, as it were, to the new realities by temperament and insight, who were ready at any opportunity to "hit out" and to create the new mass democracy, of which they regarded themselves as the personal elite. The younger men's readiness for action contrasted more and more violently with the hesitancy of the older generation. There could be no doubt that the younger ones would get their way. Nor would it be long before they did so.

Today, after our experiences of the Nazi period, it is reasonable to ask whether an authoritarian mass-democracy in the hands of the Left-wing Socialists would not have been in every way preferable to the existing regime. I do not hesitate to say that I think it would have been, though only as the lesser of two evils. But nine or ten years ago that question did not arise. The alternative to the dangers of a Left-wing solution of that sort, with a centralized mass-state, was our own purpose, to be achieved with the aid of the Nazis—not what the Nazis have since actually carried out, on their own initiative and in diametrical opposition to our intention.

This brings us to the point that is essential to an understanding of the reason why the Nationalists produced their *coup* in order to defeat a Left-wing solution, instead of working as long as they possibly could on a democratic solution of the difficult problems of the crisis. Why did they take this short cut?

In judging the German Revolution people regularly fall

into the opposite error to that made in judging the Russian one. The latter cannot be summed up merely as an attempt to carry Marxism into practice. It is at least as deeply rooted in Russian history and in the two-sided character of the Russian people. That people is filled about equally with religious, Messianic conceptions of Russia's past and with ideas of a gigantic continental empire.

The last phase of the German Revolution, Nazism, is generally regarded as a direct continuation of Pan-Germanism and Prussian militarism. This is as one-sided a view as that of the Russian Revolution as Marxist and Communist. In its final, Nazi phase the German Revolution is just as much a realization of Marxist as of nationalist ideas. Only the supporters of Marxist theories, and, needless to say, of Nazism, refuse to admit the fact. Nazism is the last stage of development of the process of secularization and of permanent revolution that has continued since the sixteenth century, while Bolshevism is a typically Russian national movement.

The resemblance between the two is due to their common share of the general conceptions of Marxism. The similarity in the methods of domination in the two countries is due to the nature of that domination, the dictatorship by means of which the new order is to be enforced. The features that distinguish them are the German and Russian national elements.

In one of my conversations with Hitler these common elements of Bolshevism and Nazism are fairly plainly revealed. I am afraid that it was this that brought me the sudden outburst of hostility from my Social Democratic

fellow-exiles. I must none the less repeat, whether it loses me existing sympathies or cuts me off from new ones, that Marxism, and in particular the popular form of German Marxism, has virtually found in Nazism its *reductio ad absurdum*, just as Pan-German nationalism and Prussian militarism have done.

This has not yet been realized in wide and important sections of the Western democracies. Is it precisely this that has been the main obstacle up to now in the way of a clear stand against Hitler in the political war, a stand with the clarity of language and the clarity and nobility of aim that will be of critical importance?

It is necessary to guard against misinterpretation. It is not for me to discuss the need for any reform of the political institutions or the social conditions of other states than Germany. What I have to say here against German Marxism, the popular socialism based on the materialist conception of history, has nothing to do with the practical struggle for social reforms, for the abolition of existing privileges; and, in short, for the revitalization of a political life that is perhaps antiquated and ossified, with institutions that have no vitality left in them.

If we were to accept the idea of a German Revolution with its various phases, we should have to say that a belated and only transitory middle-class liberal democracy came into power. The mutually hostile radical phases of Nazism and socialism made it impossible for this middle-class democracy to function. We then entered the phase of Jacobinism and terrorism, and at the same time into that of the ex-

pansion of the revolution by military means. That would be the Nazi phase.

It would be tempting to build up this theory of a typical rhythm of radicalization in the German Revolution on the lines of the French one; but the comparison would not be sound. I think I can see, on the contrary, a totally different process at work. A single great revolutionary movement is at work in Western civilization, proceeding from bourgeois liberalism to Marxist socialism and the Caesarian mass-state (whether in the form of Fascism, Nazi nihilism, Communist Bolshevism, or, it may be, state socialism of rational planning which is still developing). As the counter-movement against this revolutionary course, we find developing out of confused and only half-conscious beginnings what we called, with Hofmannsthal, the Conservative Revolution. It is the complete reversal of the existing political course.

But this counter-movement has not yet taken a clear and appropriate shape. It is taking part in experiments with totalitarian Caesarian social and political orders and in purely reactionary experiments. It is therefore constantly confused with Fascist or Nazi tendencies. It has a share in such experiments as those of Portugal and Austria, but also in that of Spain, and now France. It is as yet an unclarified, rudimentary movement, conceivably even one with no future at all.

You will ask whether I advocate, perhaps, a repetition of the phase of restoration under the Holy Alliance that ended the epoch of the French Revolution, in order to end, as

must be accomplished sooner or later, the Nazi and Fascist crisis.

Here again I think we should go cautiously with comparisons. One thing only seems to be certain: that Nazism is an element in the revolutionary development, whereas the motives that led us—that is to say, a number of Young Conservative politicians—into our mistaken support of Nazism were connected with the beginnings of the Conservative counter-movement.

I believe today just as much as I did ten years ago that we were driven into the Nazi movement by justified misgivings and apprehensions. I do not mean justified on the principle of “my country, right or wrong” but justified on the ground that that late fruit of the French Revolution in Germany—that belated rule of notabilities where there scarcely existed any notabilities; that establishment of a liberalism which in its later forms had long since become questionable—that all this was entirely out of date and the admittance of the ideas of national democracy was as mistaken for Germany as for all the new national states of central Europe and the European near east.

CATASTROPHIC POLICY

THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL states of Europe, for their part, should have been able to build up their own common system in peaceful evolution, without German meddling or the brutal intervention of a conquering dictator, and to break the shackles that had so hampered and burdened the postwar Europe: the national economic systems and the political artificialities, each defended day by day as the most precious and sacred of institutions, while the things of real importance were ignored or suppressed. Why could not all these little and big ententes at least remove a few barriers and allow free scope over wide areas? If the elements in Europe, outside Germany, that were making history and building up the future were so strong, why was the new order not set up while Germany was weak and was ready to play her part within any reasonable higher order? You contend that my own big program in foreign policy convicts me of being after all a German nationalist and expansionist, though more reasonable and prudent than the Nazis or the German Nationalists. Do you make that inference simply from my statement that I regarded Germany as the natural leader of central Europe?

The dictator's rough intervention always becomes a historical necessity when those in power fail to keep up with vital changes in the world. Napoleon, looking back on his career, described his political aim as the creation of a greater and a united Europe. Since his day Nazism alone has gone beyond the spinning of idle utopias in this direction and tried actually to remove material obstacles. It did so in its own way and for its own benefit, not for the sake of any European idea. But at least it acted and did not merely talk. I have no intention of making excuses to you for Nazism. But we must, nevertheless, ask ourselves why this movement was able to achieve such immense successes. It can only have been because it was, in some measure, in harmony with the current of the times in bursting dams which had long ceased to serve any useful purpose but were simply obstacles—this splitting up of a continent that cried aloud for a great, new free form, and saw itself condemned for all time to see its prosperity and its future jeopardized in internal struggles for power between its members, each of which imagined itself to be the whole body.

Nazism and its new order of European extent must be fought by setting the genuine European order against the false one. If it is imagined that it can be fought by merely giving all those members the right, even after this new war, once more to live in absurd rivalries with each other and to prefer their little imperialisms to one great one, that would mean that apparently even disasters cannot open men's eyes. After this second world war the nationalist Europe of sovereign national states is an anachronism. The

things Hitler has been able to destroy have been more or less legitimately destroyed. The task now is not to restore the obsolete but to create a new order which carries over from the old one so much of it as was of value.

Nazism will disappear; what will and must remain is the spaciousness of a new order of more than European scope, a new world equilibrium. This is obviously not to be produced at a stroke; it can only become possible through the blows of great catastrophes or the tenacious labor of slow and deliberate development. The catastrophes have become inevitable because there has been a lack in all nations of the able leadership needed for undertaking a process of evolution in due time.

A good proportion of the persons who went over to Nazism from other political camps had the strong feeling that they were co-operating in the creation of a new order. In working with it we also hoped to be able once more to procure due rank for the German nation. These were ideas and aspirations of which no one can deny the justification. They had nothing to do with what Nazism is now proclaiming as its new order. Among the Nazis themselves there were men who at first had altogether different ideas from those which have now been imposed on the movement. The ideas of these men, and the undeniable energy and vitality and devotion of some of them, carried away not a few of those who had their doubts of the movement. One had the feeling that may perhaps be described as revolutionary *par excellence*—the feeling that the opportunity had come for creative work to which it was worth while

to devote one's whole life and strength. I make no secret of the fact that I broke away only with regret from association with some of these men, in whom I had found comrades, in the best sense, for the pursuit of beneficent aims. These were men who had nothing whatever in them of the gangster or desperado. If you want to call this sympathy with Nazism, you are perfectly free to do so. When one sets oneself, at a fairly ripe age, what amounts to a new objective in public work, it is difficult to abandon one's hopes of it without breaking right away from it. I make no secret, therefore, of the fact that my break with Nazism has not made me unjust to the movement or a hater of it or of many of its members. My only feeling is of grief that a movement which had such opportunities, together with a faith that really might have moved mountains, should so have gone to ruin.

But I do not want to be misunderstood in any way. My break with the movement was final, not only because I had seen its seamy side, but because I had begun to perceive in Nazism the embodiment and the clearest expression of all that I had come to realize as the great tragedy of the German nation and the world.

You contend that we ought to have had more patience. A few more years of the "policy of fulfillment," and the fetters both of Germany's international political difficulties and of the economic depression would have fallen away of themselves. You charge us Germans with being in the habit of behaving like obstreperous children just when we are on the point of getting what we want. Brüning, you

say, should have been given time. He had already got through the heaviest part of his task and was well on the way to completing it. Am I rightly interpreting you? You are referring to his policy of deflation and his foreign policy. It was only a question of time, you suggest, for things to take a turn for the better. I should like to fill in your argument a little. The crisis in our parliamentary life; its "seized" mechanism; the incapacity of the parties to get anything done might have been brought to an end by a new party grouping. The new and younger elements I have mentioned might themselves have taken the place of the regime of "elderly statesmen." An internal evolution might have been brought about, which, to use a favorite Nazi word, would have brought Germany *schlagartig*, at a blow, into an entirely new constellation of powers. Brüning, with his immense ability, might undoubtedly have succeeded in this, and have procured for Germany once more, without war, the position she flung away in the last war. Why, then, did we oppose Brüning? Why, I think your question runs, unless because there were certain influential groups in Germany that were not interested in the slightest in getting rid of the crisis, for the solid reason that it suited them very well: they could utilize it for their own ambitious plans?

I must admit that you are right in your comparison of the Germans with obstreperous children. We always throw down our burden too soon. We are always short of the last and decisive grain of courage and endurance. But though you may be right in your contention about our impatience, the matter is not so simple as all that. We have had two

politicians, each of whom was of exceptional quality—Stresemann and Rathenau; but we have had only one statesman since Bismarck. That one, unquestionably, is Brüning. I am not sufficiently well acquainted with Brüning to be able to give any opinion as to his present political views. Even if I could give it I should not do so, because he is the only man for whose shoulders the heavy burden of German reconstruction is not too heavy.

I do not want, however, to identify myself with all of Brüning's past opinions. I do not think, nevertheless, that it would be fair to attack them today. I do not know how far he still holds to them. He has the same right as the rest of us to claim that his past practical political experiments shall not be judged as absolutes. I readily admit that we others, all of us, his own party friends included, were "party men" and he alone was, and I am sure is, above party. His statesmanly gift, his great knowledge, and his stainless character and great moral eminence, his pure spirit, affecting everyone who comes into touch with him, give him alone the right to be the conciliator-lawgiver who is indispensable to the peace on the German side.

In spite, however, of Brüning's capacity for the tasks of the most difficult years of crisis, I doubt whether the disaster that came could have been avoided on the lines he followed and with the means he chose. Not only the elements at his back in Germany were inadequate; those who had to negotiate with him and who would have had to be the partners in his actions—that is to say, the political elements in your country—were also inadequate. In France, at best, a political

interlude might have been secured, a postponement of the disaster, but scarcely its avoidance.

You will disagree. Neither of us can prove that he is right. We both rely on assumptions. My argument is based on recognition of the advanced state of political and intellectual disintegration in Europe. The solution which Brüning could, at best, have offered would have been too late by the time it became realizable.

I have been trying to sketch, from my experience of what I regarded as the essence of the German developments, the broad lines of the revolution that ravaged Germany. Its characteristic feature seemed to me to be a universal nihilism. If there is truth in that, it means two things: that Nazism is only one of the forms of expression of this revolution, one of several, in Germany; and, secondly, that this process is not confined to Germany but may become virulent in other countries under other forms. Thus the ending or overcoming of this universal revolution or revolutionary tendency calls not merely for the removal of injuries and symptoms which may have contributed to the revolutionizing but do not represent its essence. Broader and more general consideration would have been needed to stop the fatal process than the economic remedial measures, and those concerned with foreign policy, which were adopted in 1929-1932.

But is my interpretation correct? Am I not, you will ask, merely complicating simple issues? Schwarzschild, the editor of the best German review abroad, a man of complete incorruptibility and great independence of spirit, prefaced

a statement of mine in his *Tagebuch* of the reasons why I joined the Nazis with the question, whether our whole attempt to enforce a national recovery by a revolutionary breach was not mistaken and reprehensible. This touched the heart of the question. There had been a mistake, and we were responsible for it. But could it have been avoided? Is it not permissible to ask after every revolution: "Very well—some things have been achieved; but were they worth all the destruction, could they not have been achieved through patient reform and without this devastation?" Schwarzschild, one of the few German political writers who, through unceasing self-criticism, have grown year by year in ripeness and weightiness of judgment, made it perfectly plain that he himself had not the slightest belief in the possibility of reversing the march of time. He saw the future in new outlines and sharply condemned a sterile and unteachable obsession with the past. But if seven years of the bitterness of exile have not enabled even a few, besides him, of the responsible elements of the past German regime to acquire more adequate ideas of the limits of their activity, how could this have been possible while they were still in power, with all the aloofness from the really vital questions which characterizes all ruling groups when they have been year after year at the helm?

This is where Schwarzschild is mistaken. Where a nation possesses balanced judgment and keen public spirit, it may succeed in avoiding disasters and attaining, by means of steadily sought and laboriously won reforms, the ends usually produced by revolutions. Great Britain has achieved

this, but France had to pursue the path of revolution and will in all probability continue to do so. I do not want to give the impression that I regard the revolutionary path as fated to be ours in Germany. I do not believe in fate; I believe in man's freedom to control his destiny. What happened in Germany was certainly, as you will remind me, not a genuine revolution but an artificial diversion of revolutionary forces—a true abortion, preventing a natural birth. But no one can deny that Germany was pregnant with true revolutionary life. At the back of the determination not to allow revolution to break out was the very thing with which our friend Schwarzschild was unprepared to credit us: the desire to steer along the course of reform and of gradual, organic evolution.

In this connection you put to me a question for which I am not unprepared. You say that what is even more difficult for you to understand than my joining the Nazis is that, once that crossing of the Rubicon into the country of the new barbarism had been made, the attempt should be made to cross back again. Either one is a nationalist and unwaveringly in pursuit of everything that can make one's own nation great, or one has other views. It seems to me that you have a pretty strong word on the tip of your tongue—"apostate." Don't keep it back! It has been branded on my cheeks before now, and not only by the Nazis.

What was it that brought earnest men into the Nazi camp? I wanted to answer this question of yours, but it seems to me that I have not succeeded in making my answer intelligible. You want to know why we did not stick to

Nazism if we saw degeneration and decay in an order that to the West is synonymous with civilization and humanity. In political life it is not usual to recognize and correct the inevitable one-sidedness in one's political outlook. The mechanism of parties and the alternation between them in the conduct of public affairs is a sufficient corrective. Accordingly it is usually in accordance with the rules of the game for everybody to hold fast to his own political views and to leave their correction to the mechanism of the political system. But at times of crisis like the present that is not enough. To hold unteachably at such times to one's own one-sided opinions is no longer a sign of character but of narrowness. At such times, to refuse to modify one's outlook and correct one's judgment, to refuse to admit one's mistakes, is weak and vain and selfish.

Why have Nazis who saw the rise of Germany into an undreamed-of future under Hitler turned away from him the more determinedly the greater his successes in foreign affairs grew? Is that to be explained merely by the obvious fear that Hitler's methods meant Germany's self-destruction; that his successes could not be permanent but must give place to a more profound exhaustion and a more complete defeat even than that which ended the last war?

Such reflections certainly play a part. But the essential reason lies in another direction. We were opponents of certain conceptions of democratic organization. But when this type of democracy in Germany gave place to the new repressive order and new elements established themselves in power, those democratic principles appeared in an entirely

new light. It was seen that they must on no account be dispensed with unless it was proposed to shake off all civilization.

This may sound simple, but it depends upon this fact: we learned to distinguish between the misuse of these elements of democracy in their existing shape and the eternal validity of their underlying principles. Such a process of rectification and clarification of judgment through practical experience is not to be despised. The doctrinaire adhesion to particular convictions is inferior to it. There is thus no good ground for any assumption of superiority on the part of those who "said so all along" and who were unswerving in their allegiance to democratic principles; for it is only this practical experience that brings into play the forces of real assimilation and creative education, not a purely intellectual anticipation of practical routine and the never-shaken belief in the rightness of one's own opinion.

But the lesson of temptation lies, according to the Scriptures, in the words, "take heed."

VII

WAR AGAINST PRUSSIA

YOU GIVE ME to understand that, however many remote considerations I may bring in, I cannot get away from the simple fact that the war was wanted by the German nationalists, and, indeed, by the whole nation. No amount of talking round the subject can provide an excuse for that. I could not hide the fact, however much I might try, that Prussian militarism was at the back of it all. You say that Papen was entirely right: Hitler was the subordinate employee, permitted to make a show of ruling; the actual wire pullers were the men who worked in the last war for the Pan-Germans and the Fatherland party; this time they have allied themselves instead with National Socialism. Is not that your line of argument?

You go on to say that all Germans, of whatever party, were nationalists, imperialists, dreaming of a Greater Germany and of world dominion. But how can you expect me to agree with all that? Are you thinking of what I said about German parties suffering from certain national inferiority complexes? But what has that to do with Brüning, Stresemann, and Wirth? Bismarck or Stresemann, Frederick the Great or Brüning, it is always the same spirit—

do you think I have given any support to such an idea?

If my testy remark about the self-righteousness of certain *émigré* German politicians has so misled you, I am sorry I made it. So far as the remark supposed to have been made by Herr Wirth as Chancellor is concerned, I am well aware of it. I do not know whether it has been accurately reported or has suffered distortion. But even if he actually made the remark, to infer from it that all leading Germans only affected to carry on a "policy of fulfillment," and in reality did all they could to further secret rearmament, would be a grave and a regrettable error. Stresemann, with his unfortunate reference to "finessing," has sufficed to make all our political efforts of the first ten years after the war one long deceit in your eyes.

You say that nobody can be expected to place any faith in the sincerity of the declaration of the Weimar politicians now that it is revealed how long rearmament had been planned and prepared. You ask why the opposition to Nazism was completely silenced among the nationalists of Germany from 1935, if not because they had seen by then that Hitler was not leading them to disaster but to victory. You challenge my statement that there were Germans of national outlook who went through the exact reverse of that process. All opposition in Germany, you suggest, was silenced by the argument that in home affairs the Nazis might be a set of brutes but that in foreign affairs they were magnificent—the fellow was succeeding better than we could ever have dreamed; he must be given credit for that.

You need not assure me that you heard all this from many of your old acquaintances during your last visit to Berlin. I have heard it myself.

I have too little knowledge of Stresemann to write an apologia for him; but he has no need of it. He was our most talented postwar politician. If he finessed, my friend, it was with his tormentors at home. What difficulties that man had in maintaining his position against his opponents in Germany! How would you propose to train this politically inexperienced people, torn by passions and dissensions, into a gradual appreciation of reasonable aims? You would have to speak to them in their own language. Can the well-informed politician, with his better judgment, blurt out his views in public at once, regardless of the fact that they are at variance with the existing public opinion? What long and patient efforts your politicians had to make to wrest your public from its belief in the solid basis of peace and to accustom it to the idea of fresh sacrifices for the maintenance of peace!

To charge Stresemann with having been a nationalist and warmonger in disguise is absurd. I can see only one weakness in his conception—he was too obsessed with the idea of accommodation, particularly with France. How much ground had we for assuming that there was any serious intention on the French side of working for a political accommodation between the two rival nations? Was it not precisely in France that there was “finessing”? Was not the French idea simply to dupe and delude us? In the last six months you have had a few samples of the activities of

the French political leaders. You have had to do with politicians whose tactical gift of going from one extreme view to another is extensive. I say nothing against Briand and his masterpieces of oratory. Above all, I say nothing against the French people. In these years of exile I have been able to see for myself, so far as my experience went, that the French people are truly peaceful, and for the profoundest reasons, and have rejected war as an instrument of policy. But the French people are not the same as the class of intellectuals by which their policy is determined. Probably in no democracy has there been such a gulf between the intriguing of the political leaders and the vital needs of the nation as in France. Is not that likely to have been one of the reasons why this France did not go on fighting?

Even if you distrust us nationalists, do at least leave Stresemann's memory untouched. Is everyone a nationalist in your eyes who demanded rearmament in Germany? Everyone who did not agree with dogmatic pacifism? I was certainly in favor of German rearmament; you are right in assuming that. But has not your own tragic crisis, which you are now overcoming at the cost of such sacrifices, taught you that in foreign affairs only power is effective, only power provides security? Impotence, even collective impotence, will never make a political order. These years have amply demonstrated that to us all.

Only strength can guarantee peace. If the secular task of creating a new and permanent order of world peace now faces your nation, you will only be able to cope with

it if you center that peace on a nucleus of power. That power may be the united forces of the Empire or a union between the Empire and the United States. And that which you will need for your "Atlantic Union," if I may so call it, we needed for our much more modest aim of a central European union. Not in order to keep the members of that union permanently under "pressure," but because the healthy flesh of the fruit will only grow round a healthy kernel. Every union is an association for mutual protection. It must have something that does the protecting. All else is theory and paper work.

One thing I grant you—there was and is a flaw in our calculations. In order to be the trustee of such an order, one must not seek one's own advantage first of all. One must have the strength of character not to misuse power. As things are at present, I admit that we were not the people that could withstand the temptations of power. Perhaps the Anglo-Saxon nations are the only ones whose history has endowed them with that faculty.

But is that a final condemnation of our people? Do we stand condemned of eternal immaturity, disorderliness, and destructiveness, as prominent politicians in your country declare? My dear sir, let us argue together with better impartiality than that. You have given me the opportunity of writing with all this freedom and openness in the midst of this war—me, a member of the nation with which you are fighting for life. It is a great example of the fairness and the spirit of justice that assure your nation so high a place. Since you have gone so far to meet me, let me speak quite

openly. It is asking a great deal at such a time, when your cities are being devastated and precious lives are being destroyed, to demand a juster judgment of a people with whom you are at war. I should not have the assurance to suggest such a thing if it were not that our whole future depends on it—yours as well as ours.

It is a question of the degree of maturity of the nation. Not all the nations of this heterogeneous Europe are living at the same stage. Every single nation of Europe has passed through some such period of turbulence as Germany's of today. Permit me to remind you of some of the features of your own history. Yours was the first nation to achieve a settled order. But consider France, that great, intelligent, creative nation, which for two hundred years was the source of continual unrest in Europe! Read your Burke. You need only change the names, and those speeches directed against revolutionary France might today be directed against nihilist Germany.

You accuse this Germany of being always the same, under kings or emperors, a republic or a dictatorship; is not this literally true of the French nation with its *gloire*? Whatever its system—the absolute monarchy of Louis XIV; the militant republic with the *sans culotte* of its new popular armies; the legions of that great military genius, Napoleon; the prophetic phantom of the modern dictatorships; the empire of Napoleon III—it was always the same: disorders, conquests, power, violence!

And then this nation found a settled order. Its *gloire* has become but the cult of a memory, an especially precious

heritage that has ripened into a rare refinement of spirit, of well-ordered existence, of fulfillment of promise. Why should not what this nation has attained be attained also by us?

You have accused us of impatience—of casting aside the only right policy of cautious reform and gradual recovery from the consequences of the war. The French people have attained stability. Our lot is a harder one. We lack the Latin qualities. That undoubtedly counts for something. But don't come to me with that slogan of Prussian militarism, that stalking-horse of “war against Prussia.”

Strange that even you should imagine that it was nationalist motives that created this world revolution. I am convinced that the truth is the reverse of this: nationalist elements are serving a revolution which, instead of carrying the valuable features of nationalism into a supernational order, is in process of entirely destroying nationalism.

We must not confuse a closed phase of the historic process with its moving spirit.

If we want a parallel, it would be better to describe Hitler's political aim as a modernized restoration of the great Spanish-German-Netherlands empire of Charles V. If the term can be accepted, we might describe Nazism as atheistic baroque. Replacing the Catholic faith by the catholicity of the new religion of the Leader as the incarnation of God, we have the position of Nazism in relation to the drive for world power. It is a gloomy baroque vision, dominated by a modern Inquisition, and based on dynamic paroxysms. It is the seventeenth century that has carried

Germany into this great war. It is the world of a southern and southwestern Europe in the grip of Spanish fanaticism, not the sober, practical Prussian north, that may serve as parallel. (Mind you, my good friend, I consider all such parallels as absurd. But if historic myths are to be invented about Prussia, why not have a more reasonable one of an atheistic baroque and the restoration of the world empire of Charles V?)

This Prussian myth, which is now to be served once more as a cheap explanation of certain political facts, is not one hair's-breadth more credible than the myth of race or the myth of the Jew who is to blame for everything. Most of the critics of Prussia have not, and do not want to have, the slightest knowledge of the real Prussia, its creative power in making history and making a state, its intellectual strength and the incarnation of Prussian spirit. Once more, however, I do not want to be misunderstood. Prussian militarism, blind obedience, the barracks as the expression of a general level of culture, a sterile departmental regime, social and political backwardness, unfreedom and the caste spirit—if all this is summed up in the word “Prussia,” well and good; it is justifiable to be against it. But I should suggest choosing another name for it all. Prussia has her share of these vices. There have been times when she was their actual breeding ground. But, for all that, other nations and countries have also had their share of them, and a larger share than they are ready to admit. And when this criticism comes from South German countries, I should like to ask why so many people have emi-

grated from Hesse, Bavaria, Hanover, and Swabia to find in the United States a life worthy of human beings? I should like to ask the very busy Austrian critics whether the official repression, with houses of correction and other institutions of state terrorism, under the great Empress Maria Theresa was more humane than the regime in Prussia, simply because it took place in Austria. Let us leave legends aside. We have just had experience of the dangers they involve. The method adopted by all these interpreters of history with their one key for every lock is to compare an ideal Austria and a South Germany with the real Prussia, if not with a Prussian grotesque. They judge the Prussia of the eighteenth century by the standards of the twentieth—but are careful not to extend the same process to France or Austria, Poland or Bavaria.

The outlook of those times is still these gentlemen's own outlook. It may draw applause from the gallery to go on fighting Frederick II of Prussia. But it is not Frederick that has to be conquered but the cruellest revolution that has ever afflicted this continent. Do not misunderstand me. We are not concerned with the vindication of Prussia's honor—why spend time on that subject? What does matter is that we shall not be led into side issues.

Why, after German militarism had been defeated in the last war, was there this failure to restore peace and internal order within the German nation? For the simple reason that militarism and a specially warlike spirit were not the main roots of German unrest. There has been a confusion of cause and effect. What is called militarism is the ex-

pression for the unattained equilibrium of the German nation, and consequently it was not enough to remove the symptom, that militarism. Similarly in the future the suppression of that militarism will not offer the needed guarantee of permanent peace. It leads nowhere to bring up the superficial elements of past history. But a serious and genuine historical consideration would yield the question: what is the nature of the destroyed German equilibrium which is the true cause of the permanent German unrest? Since the "main decision" of the Deputation of the Estates in 1830, since the destruction of the old Reich, our nation has been in search of a settled form, a form of state and social life which so far it has failed to find and which it did not find in the Weimar Republic. Was not Germany's earlier history incomparably more peaceful and more bloodless than that of the great Western nations? Why were the Germans then the most peaceful of peoples? Why was the German *Libertät*, of happy memory, the political slogan of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries? If we have become a military nation (but since when have we been one?) it has been because the true equilibrium of a great state has not proceeded from "*German Libertät*." Instead, that German Reich disintegrated into a loose conglomeration of its members. That was the cause of the reaction in favor of a rigidly centralized state relying on its strength.

The German people in their turn will attain the maturity which the British and French peoples have won before them. They will lay aside war as an instrument of policy

as those nations have done. They will do it voluntarily and not under compulsion. Only if it is a voluntary act will it endure. Our people are on the way to this act. German militarism, our military discipline, is no more than a substitute for a genuine form of national life. We are the most formless of all the European nations. So soon as we have found equilibrium, we shall develop a new manner of life. Then that substitute, our surface militarism, with its command and obedience, will disappear. We shall recognize that it was not an expression of strength and virtue but of our internal weakness.

VIII

EUROPA IRREDENTA

WE PRUSSIANS ARE destined to be the Jews of the Fourth Reich. We may be made the scapegoat of the whole world. So you hold to your judgment; and you have used a phrase which I did not expect from you. You say Prussia is the asocial element among the nations. Anyone who is asocial should be under lock and key, and has lost the rights of an ordinary member of the community.

That is an *émigré* judgment, not your own. As it happens, I could give you some details of the history of Prussia, and they would give you an entirely different picture from the cheap commonplaces that are being bandied about once more. Among the losses I suffered through the searches to which my home was subjected by the Gestapo was a manuscript work on the end of the Prussian order. It was a manuscript of more than a thousand closely written sheets. For twenty years I had devoted my spare time to the study of the historical documents on the subject, and I shall never be able to write that book again. What I could do would be to give you a little lecture based on it to show what is really the root of the "Prussian idea," that Prussia which had much more of the nature of puritanism,

with a deep piety beneath its rough exterior, than of militarism. Shall I tell you of the great official figures of the late Prussia? Liberal, humane men of the highest classical culture?

It is absurd that at this time of acute philosophical, political, and intellectual differences we should be led astray by such cheap devices as the true representation of one country and the highly imaginary representation of another, followed by a flood of criticism on that basis. I think I said something of the sort in my last letter.

Let us leave all this useless accumulation of rubbishy pseudo-historic generalizations to lie and gather dust. Hitler, my friend, is much more indebted for his ideas of war and dynamism to Socialist than to Prussian thinkers. When people are so full of Prussia, why do they forget that it was Proudhon who wrote one of the most impressive apologetics for war? It was Sorel who made violence the foundation of social change. *National Socialism is Marxism rampant.* That is the essential truth from which the wild and witless cry after Prussia of "stop thief!" diverts men's attention.

No more, please, of that! But I should like to say something in reply to your contention that all our thoughts have been of *revanche*, our one idea, "Down with Versailles!" There is one thing I must first say plainly. Never can the Versailles treaty justify the violence and oppression, the murders and the terrorism Nazism has wreaked in these last years on Germany's neighbors. But our cry for a just instrument of peace must not be set alongside that. Nor is

it any answer to talk of the treaties of Brest-Litovsk and Bucharest. The right comparison is with what would have been for the good for Europe, what could have been done and ought to have been done, what, if done in time, might have prevented this long tragedy.

It is true that there was a widespread feeling among the German people that the Versailles treaty of peace was an injustice and that, in addition to this, the defeat was not, in some sense, a real one. This feeling of not having been really beaten will, perhaps, be easier to understand today, after the mysterious collapse of France. But it did not play the part Hitler's propaganda speeches suggest. Even among the so-called nationalist elements there was a preponderance of those who considered that a change in the European order was essential but believed that it could be secured without war, by evolutionary means.

It was not so much the Treaty of Versailles that mattered to the German people. What counted more was the disappointment of those who fought in the last war at its general outcome. I think that was a universal feeling, not confined to the defeated nations. It was a feeling of having been cheated by the politicians of the true object of the long years of sacrifice. This had nothing to do with the peace itself, although with many people this feeling of disappointment later took the form of national indignation. It was something more general, the belief in "a better world," that then, as today, supported the younger element amid the trials of the time. A better, worthier, juster world. However our individual ideas might vary, one thing

seemed to us to be indispensable—a new community of nations and a new moral basis of political and social life, making any repetition of the tragedy not only impossible but unnecessary.

The fact that no such new community was created, and that in its place we were presented with the pitiful spectacle of the League of Nations, was the fundamental reason for the turning over of the great mass of the people to nationalist extremes. There had come a petty peace, not a great one. A legal instrument in the form of a dictated peace had become the basis of the new order, not a true *Magna Charta* for a new Europe and a new world.

Because *your* leaders, because these democrats, had not brought it into being, *we* had to go in search of an order that could be lasting. In accepting the heavy burden of defeat and of the policy of fulfillment, we felt that we were preparing ourselves for the great task which before and during the war we had neglected in our pursuit of the mistaken idea of a Pan-German empire. Today we see the nationalist elements in France returning to earlier traditions in order to make a fresh start in the historic mission of their own people and in the process of regeneration; similarly after *our* defeat the magic word “Reich” seemed to lend us the strength we needed for the achievement of a new form for the federal association of a number of peoples.

It is only natural that amid its country’s misfortune a nation should develop special messianic ideas, as the Polish people did in the past with its Nickiewicz, or France now,

or Germany at that time. But there were also material reasons why the ordering of central Europe could be the task only of the German people. It could achieve that task, it is true, only if it identified its destinies with those of the new small nations, placing itself at the head of the nations, which, speaking in quite general terms, had not yet completed their evolution; had, like Germany herself, not yet achieved a settled order.

Could hard work have produced a federation of the central European nations, as it once produced the Prussian *Zollverein*? It is difficult to say; but it was natural that our thoughts should turn irresistibly in that direction. A German-Austrian centralist national-democratic unitary state, produced by an *Anschluss*, seemed to us to be an entirely inadequate solution, based on the ideas of the nineteenth century and insufficient for the needs of the twentieth.

Such a solution seemed to us almost a crime against the future of the whole territory of central Europe. We were concerned for a more or less close federation of states, with a wide measure of freedom for national cultural institutions in a system embracing many autonomous groups for economic, educational, and agricultural administration.

The principle of the national-democratic sovereignty of a state such as France was just what we wanted to avoid. That seemed to us to be the most unsuitable principle for the whole territory, which contained no great states with old traditions except Austria and Prussia and in which the nationalities were inextricably intermixed.

Soon after the war there appeared a book that clearly outlined the situation. It was written by a Baltic German, Max Hildebert Boehm—*Europa Irredenta*. It contained the root of the idea of a Third Reich—not a German empire but a condominium of the peoples of central Europe in a common federation. In this territory the full sovereignty of national unitary states was virtually impossible. In its place there could only be some sort of cantonal order. On such lines it would have been possible to create a political order embracing a number of countries, with a united territory which, economically, would have an assured existence—an order capable of serving as a factor in the peaceful stabilization of Europe.

But how could this be carried into effect? There stood in its way, not only the formal provisions of the peace treaties, but also the will to independence and expansion, working in quite other directions, of each of the new or enlarged states of central and eastern Europe. These states had virtually resuscitated a stage of development dating from the middle of the past century. Their existence belonged to a different phase from Germany's, making any real collaboration with her to all appearances impossible. In addition to this, there would have been intrigue on the part of political elements among the Western powers to face, since those powers feared any such union of central European peoples as the first step to German hegemony in Europe.

Such considerations make it easy to understand that the feeling should grow, even among those who were in favor

of prudent methods of evolution, that any such association could only be centered on a strong power. Before Germany could carry out any such policy she must herself be strong and internally united. Not in order to make conquests, but to be able to guarantee security—and, of course, to overcome sterile opposition.

I am not afraid of making use here of a conception which may sound trite and curious in my mouth. I refer simply to the elementary human struggle for improvement in general which is called Progress; it was precisely this that lay at the back of our efforts, not merely a repetition of the nationalism of the nineteenth century.

BANKRUPT FARMERS

HE WHO LOOKS at himself does not shine. There is a saying to some such effect in the Far East. Why do you want to know something of my personal career? It is not customary here in England to be one's own interpreter. You say that it is of importance nevertheless to know whether I really belong to the class of Prussian *Junkers* and big landowners, whether I am a monarchist, whether I am an old and intimate friend of Hitler's.

I am not a *Junker*, nor a big landowner. Nor, however, am I one of those people who amused themselves and passed the time by farming in a small way. I came back to agriculture comparatively late in life; but that is my real profession, and I put a great deal of hard work into it. I never farmed our family property in East Prussia, since my father as an officer had to sell it. My property in the Danzig territory, on very fertile alluvial soil, was a medium-sized farm of not quite 250 acres, but it was worked very intensively, both in tillage for sugar beet and oil seed and in cattle breeding. On this small farm I had as a rule ten brood mares of heavy build, on the Belgian system: that is to say, with about seven foals in the

year. I bred prize pigs, and most of my cattle were entered in the German cattle records with maximum yield. I had the best heifer yield in our breeding area.

Such a farm, in which one does not do the plowing oneself—in any case, with our heavy soil we used four to six horses and worked only from the saddle—demands continual supervision from early to late and into the night, and attention to all sorts of details. The townsman has no conception of the amount of work to be done with such an amount of stock simply in carefully measured feeding, obstetric records, care of the animals' health, and so on. The problems are so multifarious, and each returning task has so many elements of novelty that the farmer's profession demands a high degree of independence of judgment and decision, and is by no means to be despised. Tillage is a "system of expedients" that continually calls for fresh decisions. One can never just follow the rules. The old rules that have proved their excellence are no more than the general framework within which particular decisions have to be taken anew all the time.

Such radically differentiated and many-sized farms, which are still of a size that can be managed by a single person, are probably as good a school for the practical intelligence as is to be found. I should like nothing better than to be once more carrying on a farm of this sort, with a soil from which one can get anything in spite of difficult climatic conditions, a farm whose many-sidedness demands considerable skill in management. My former colleagues in the farming profession in the delta of the Vistula

are among the best and foremost farmers of all Germany, although they belong to the despised country east of the Elbe. There is nothing about them of the "gentleman farmer," with only his walking stick in his hand. These farmers know better what work is than many of those leaders of "working people" who have spent all their lives pushing pens in business or editorial offices and who base on that record a claim to look down upon us as spongers on society. We know what hard work is, and our profession is the richest of all in dangers and disasters. It is no idyll. We bear on our bodies the scars of struggles with young stallions or machines or other brutes that "try to kill men."

Although I was not intended for this profession, it is the only one in which I have been what men call happy. Not because of its freedom and independence, but because this profession brings one into touch with every sphere of human life. I have had bitter disappointments in this work, and I have had successes. To build up breeds and gradually to attain a type of herd of one's own, to choose the right sires: all these are things that make more demands on a man's wits than the city-bred intellectuals with their book learning dream. Thus for my part I am inclined to set the farmer's shrewd judgment, of which people so often have a mean opinion, far above the city dweller's intelligence. In any case, the time has passed when the young man who is a little dense and does not take kindly to his lessons is set down as good enough for farming.

My farm was not a remote heaven of secluded peace,

but neither was it a *Junker's* estate with the pleasures of a life of hunting and riding. This Junkerdom, in any case, is not what is imagined. It is generally written and talked about by people who know little or nothing about it. My great-grandfather's farm may perhaps have come into the category of what are considered large estates. I am a distant connection of most of the *Junker* families of East Prussia, though my father's family can trace its ancestry through a line of yeomen farmers in Samland, East Prussia, back to the fourteenth century. For that is precisely what East Prussia contained—yeomen farmers. The idea its enemies in West Germany had of Prussia, as a country in which the shadow of serfdom lay over all life, has not the slightest resemblance to the truth. East Prussia was a land of independent farmers, "big" and "small." Both classes were represented in the local Diets. The "nobility" came among us centuries later.

What, then, is the *Junker*? The tyrant waving his gun over the heads of his enslaved laborers and ravishing all their daughters? Permit me to say that I have intimate knowledge of the life of the *Junkers* and that the truth is very different from all this. I know a baroness who became the wife of a distinguished general and who in her youth took turns week by week with her sisters in doing duty in the cowsheds, sharing the first milking at 2 A.M. with the milkmaids. I know the Puritan sternness and simplicity of habits and morals in these circles. I know their unselfish care and helpfulness, as a matter of course, for their staff and workers. I have the most intimate knowledge of all

that section of society, with its extremely simple mode of living.

It has, it is true, undergone a change in the last two generations. But where have there not been signs of decay? This Junkerdom was, moreover, up to the last two decades of the nineteenth century, what was called liberal in Germany. Liberal, not in the urban sense of emancipation from custom and convention and the Christian tradition, but in the broadest sense of the humaneness that is the fruit of profound culture. I still have the long letters written by my great-grandfather and my grandmother to each other in 1848-1849, amid the widespread anxiety aroused by the first German revolution. My grandmother was then staying with her uncle, who was the military tutor to the later Emperor Frederick. She was frequently at the court of the then Princess of Prussia, later Empress Augusta. She wrote to her father of the spiritual and liberal life in the then remote palace of Babelsberg, the political discussions, and the way her red tie, part of her Scottish dress, scandalized a relative who was in the Potsdam regiment of the Guards; he asked her whether the country population of East Prussia had all gone over to Jacobinism. Her father wrote to her of the anxieties of the East Prussian farmers and of the necessity of maintaining homeliness of outlook and community with the simple country people. He protested against the constitution imposed by the king, which nobody approved except perhaps the district *Landrat*.

There looked down on me every day as a small child the figures of the German heroes of 1848, the members

of the first German Parliament. The revolutionary Blum and the fine poets' heads of Jacob Grimm and Ludwig Uhland, von Gagern, and our Königsberger member, the great Jewish liberal, Simson, faced me in a great picture and were the subjects of many questions put in a child's curiosity. It was not only that one of our relatives was there in the picture as a Prussian plenipotentiary—he sat close to Bettina von Arnim, that Prussian landowner who in a book too little known (*Dies Buch gehört dem König—This Book Is the King's Concern*—was its title) confessed her adherence to socialism—but the liberal ideas had struck firm roots in the province, in this reactionary East Prussia, among the “*Krautjunker*,” the supposed fox-hunting squires and the “militarists”; and these traditions, in spite of all the changes in these families, were still respected and held in honor at the end of the last century, as the ideas of their grandparents.

One thing above all was characteristic of these *Junkers*: a puritanical, sternly self-disciplining, and also pietistic Christianity. I remember my grandmother as an old lady, after the labors of looking after the domestic side of a big agricultural estate, reading Kant and Schleiermacher. She had, it is true, been personally connected through her mother with those who had had daily intercourse with Kant, and knew many things about the philosopher's life. Her acquaintance with the great preacher, Schleiermacher, was kept alive through some East Prussian families. I still have Schleiermacher's copy of a very early edition of Bach's “*Well-tempered Clavichord*,” in which Schleier-

macher had marked his favorite preludes and fugues. He had given this copy to Henriette von Willig, who became his wife.

These are matters really only of personal interest, but I mention them because they reveal something beyond the mere remembered details—that the true life in Germany went on in seclusion and these literary coiners and forgers simply know nothing of it. So it is today, and so it always will be. The “true Germany,” about which there is so much wild talk, is not to be found in this or the other party scheme but among the people living quietly in their country, who are at all times the reservoir for a spiritual Germany of whose rebirth we do not despair even in these dark days.

My grandmother was no exception among her neighbors. She had on her desk, for daily reading, Thomas à Kempis' *Imitatio Christi*. This Protestant Christianity, fed on Kant and the liberal Schleiermacher, and descended from an earnest and ardent faith in Old Testament teaching, was not so narrowly denominational as not to make use also of the great literature of the Christian world. I know, too, that my grandfather, who used to lead the scything at harvest time, used to write verses in his leisure hours. Not out of literary ambition, but for the pleasure of intellectual occupation.

I passed the critical years of my youth in the Prussian Cadet Corps. This Cadet Corps not only provided a relatively inexpensive education for sons of impoverished Prussian *Junkers* and officers, and not only a purely mili-

tary training, but served as a sort of school for training in comradeship, a sense of honor, and personal courage, united with simplicity, genuine Christian religiousness, and devotion to the Prussian ruling house. In spite of all its weaknesses, this training was admirable, and its educational side not so bad as was widely supposed. I can remember, at all events, some of my masters' moral instruction in those early years. Our mathematics master, for instance, tried to make clear to the young officer-to-be, then twelve or thirteen years of age, the existence of the imperishable intellectual world, which he contrasted with a world of "gold foam and rose leaves." The fine-sounding phrase rings still in my ears after all these decades. He gave us boys as an example of the real nature of intellectual effort the repeated rewritings of the *Leonora* overture. It may be that this example has stuck in my memory only because I had the distinction of coming early into touch with the musical world. Our military instructor—he fell in the last war—was no less active in introducing us to a world that lay far from our military profession. He was an uncle of the well-known Young Conservative, Möller von den Bruck, who later shared much of my intellectual outlook. This master not only read to us reports of the Boer War, then in progress, but took us with fine understanding into the magic world of Gerhart Hauptmann's *Versunkene Glocke* (*The Sunken Bell*), which had just been published. This highly cultured man, one of those Prussian officers who belonged to the true intellectual aristocracy,

painted and made music and shared with us youngsters all his intellectual interests.

There was nothing of barbarism about all this. They were splendid boys. Many were of old family and lived with the utmost simplicity. Most of them were from relatively poor homes, used to privation, despising luxury, religious, though, as is usual at that age, affecting to be skeptics. The only one who was out of harmony with the rest, so far as I discovered, a little cynic who told lascivious stories of the townsman's sort, was a youth who did not belong to this circle by birth.

I recall a memorable day on which Lord Roberts, outwardly so insignificant a figure, the late Lord Kitchener, and General French came to inspect us—in 1907, I think—and we did gymnastics in their presence in the Prussian style. I still have the photograph I took of that gymnastic inspection. Comradeship, few words, but true friendship; woe to anyone who did not share everything he received from home, who did not keep the smallest share for himself if anything had been sent to him. Corporate spirit, selflessness, helpfulness, and encouragement for the younger boys—I do not know where more attention can have been paid to these things. It was socialism, a true Prussian socialism.

No apology is needed for Prussianism. It is necessary, however, to protest against all the childish pictures that are painted of Prussia by persons with no real knowledge of the subject. Prussia's record is closed. It will never be reopened. No one knows that better than those whose

hearts were with Prussia but who have become convinced that the time for that type of state has passed—as it must pass also for the other states.

I prolonged my student days and abandoned the military career. Not until war came did I become an officer. I studied music, and not merely as an amateur. My ambition was to become a church organist. I studied counterpoint and composition in Munich, and I managed for years to believe that I was destined to bring new life into the musical side of the services of the German Evangelical Church. I studied the history of the chorale, and had visions of a new musical development of divine service, following the ecclesiastical year, on the model of the musical office of the older Lutheran service, a free form of devotional music based on the evangelical plain song. This occupation did not remain entirely fruitless: it enabled me at least to write and publish a considerable historical work.

Those years in which my generation was studying were perhaps the last and finest flowering of bourgeois culture. Immense intellectual wealth was poured before the young men who were at the university in 1906. But it was a distracting and crippling wealth. In these intellectual currents there were no really great and controlling elements, though there was much that enriched and delighted and stimulated. I had the opportunity at that time of plunging into a whirl of intellectual pursuits, from Sanskrit and ancient Norse to economic history, which I read under Lujo von Brentano. A special experience was our work under Freiherr von Hertling, the later Chancellor, then a member of the

Reichsrat. He was lecturing on philosophy—and on metaphysics! Did such subjects really still exist? We young men who had read Spinoza, Kant, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche at school were inclined to regard all that as a curiosity. This professor, then already growing old, even dictated notes to us. He was altogether old-fashioned, and yet his lectures contained a germ that sprang to life decades later—the ideas, then becoming new once more, of Neo-Thomism, a great world of ideas springing from Catholic Christianity which was displayed to us and which, for those of us who had grown up under strictly Protestant teaching, opened out an entirely new vista.

Shall I go on to tell you about my hobbies, as is done for everybody in your *Who's Who*: that I did not collect postage stamps, but did collect first editions; that I was a shrubbery enthusiast? (To me humanity is divided into those who are enthralled by the wonders of the seven seasons of the shrubbery and those who are deaf to that music.) At night, when we went through the stables to see that all was in order, when the horses stamped and the cows mooed in their sleep and the stallion neighed softly to us, we had a day's cares and labors behind us. We needed no political excitements to prove that we were alive.

The breeder is a co-creator and an ennobler of nature. But the deepest fascination is that of the mystery of the fertility of the arable land. Our thoughts returned again and again to this point: the maintenance and increase of the fertility of the plowed fields. What had this to do

with economic return, with the necessity of getting the highest possible rent and recording the highest possible yield? Our old farmers had a seven-year rotation. They still farmed in accordance with the Mosaic law and allowed the field to rest in the seventh year. It lay fallow. The fertility recovered in that seventh year served for all the years that followed. The modern agriculturist does as he thinks best. He must in order to bring in the return to meet his capital service. But if he is not very careful his fields lose their humus, the soil becomes diseased, and the mysterious life expires. Did not Moses know better than we modern farmers? Is the farmer responsible for the maintenance of fertility? He can be, and will be, only if he is not out merely to draw an economic profit from his farm for a few years, but is firmly rooted in that one plot with his family, generation after generation, through the ages. Is not that the explanation of the preservation of the fertility of our European soil through more than 2000 years of civilization? Whereas in the younger continents the fields become sterile after a hundred or fifty or twenty-five years' cultivation.

Agriculture is not merely an economic occupation. It provides the foundation for the renewal of the population, and in its fertility it maintains the nation's homeland. These are facts that could not but carry us far from a liberalizing agrarian policy; they brought us into touch with the slogans formulated by Darré, the Nazi Minister of Food, when he contrasted the farmer who thinks only of his economic

interests with *the peasants who are rooted generation after generation in their land.*

How little of all this is understood by the urban economist or politician who thinks purely in scientific categories. Still less does he realize the absolute dependence of agriculture on forces that will always be beyond control. In the nature of things agriculture can never be brought into the form of an exact, rationalized process of production. The farmer is under a constant temptation to attribute daemonic qualities to the irrational factors in his profession. He has daily experience of the reality of the daemonic forces of nature. He stands always with one foot in paganism. He lives in the mythical world of customs and superstitions, of exorcisms and magic rites. Nowhere is the temptation greater to abandon oneself to this mysterious world, whose voice is never entirely silenced.

I mention this to suggest to you how it was possible for the German rural population to give the vote that decided the victory of Nazism in the last great electoral struggle for power in 1932. The country people were attacked at their weak point by the party agitators. It was not merely the economic element that mattered. Nazism was well alive to the fact that the peasant, too, does not live by bread alone but has his own world of ideas and emotions. Nazism—unhappily for us farmers—was the first to learn how to appeal to that world of ideas, and even to awaken the latent, subconscious paganism of the peasant. Nazi propaganda succeeded, not only in gaining psychological command of the mass-collectivity; it also articu-

lated a language that touched the most sensitive nerve of the peasant, with his mentality unaltered since the Stone Age.

The true elements of a sound agricultural policy are not easily extricated from the thicket of party politics. On one side, agricultural reform is taken to mean further measures for breaking down existing or imagined positions of social power, and, on the other, special financial assistance for the sake of a real or supposed special national purpose. Even Professor Aereboe, one of the shrewdest and most stimulating men with whom I ever had the privilege and benefit of conversation, was caught too much, in parts of his belated book on agrarian policy, by the transitory problems of the day.

I should not touch on this question were it not that there are unteachable doctrinaires among the German *émigrés* who have once more placed in the center of their discussions of agrarian policy the "land problem," imagining that in doing so they are solving the difficult approaching task of keeping German agriculture alive. Once more men's heads are being filled with the mythical remedy of "rural industries," as if the real problem were not to avoid the random creation of such industries (since it would very soon be followed by their collapse in a new commercial crisis) and instead to create a lasting equilibrium and so prevent ruinous breaks in prices of all agricultural produce. If it is desired to tackle the big landowners of the country, that is a political enterprise that might be

justified under certain circumstances. But let it be entered upon as that, and not as an economic enterprise.

As for the "restoration of German agriculture" by land settlement, that is a pure utopia. We have not enough urban dwellers who want to go back to the land and live the hard life of small farmers, and especially small farmers' wives; and, even if we had, they would be unable to exist under the conditions that will inevitably face German agriculture in the future.

It is out of the question for the existing high price level for agricultural produce to be maintained in the future. But that means that all the smaller holdings at present under the plow will become once more much what they were before Bismarck's national economic policy of the late seventies—poor pasture, untilled land, or forest. It is an illusion that the settler on partitioned big estates could exist under that return to extensive cultivation. He might perhaps do so if he accepted a standard of living far below that of today's urban unemployed; but will he accept it? Can he? I think the experience of land settlement under the Weimar regime showed that he cannot face that prospect. That means that a law would come into operation which would not be that which Aereboe regarded as the law productive of agrarian recovery, not the passing of the land into the hands of the best farmer, but its passing into the hands of the most easily satisfied. That means the spread of extensive cultivation. It may even mean the abandonment of the land to more unexacting nations. It would be a process of immixture of alien populations. A process

which may be observed at present both in France and Germany—in the infiltration of Italians and Spaniards into France and of Poles into Germany.

The thing that, on the other hand, is widely needed is urban fringe development in the form of garden suburbs. This type of development aims at bringing the workers and the middle class back to the land, but in a way suited to their needs. Not peasant colonies, with tiny holdings cultivated with the spade; if the economically efficient system of big landed estates is to be restricted, then medium-sized farms should be created for cultivation with teams. In addition, industries should be scattered as far as possible, in order to give the urban population a new sort of association with the soil. Here spade culture is the type needed, and garden cultivation and the keeping of fowls and the like is the right economic form of enterprise.

One of the most elementary needs for the pacification of the German people is to enable everyone, as nearly as possible, to have a house and garden to live in. This is simply indispensable for the spiritual balance of the Germans, and would give better guarantees for the future than all the political frontier demarcations and sanctions. Only in this way can a new sort of balance between rural and urban populations be produced in Germany—not by “home colonization,” peasant holdings. To this day fifty per cent of the French people are peasants; no more than twenty-five per cent of the Germans. Industrialization and urbanization could only be ended by the dying out of the urban population. The most intensive land settlement could make

no substantial difference in the relative percentages. But what is possible at any time, and would be of immense value, is the semiurban garden estate system.

All this was clear before January 30, 1933. Two things were then possible for the protection of agriculture. One was the removal of all agricultural produce from the free market, in other words, total protectionism. This would have enabled the high level of intensive cultivation to be maintained. So long as the utmost independence of foreign supplies was pursued as a political aim, this agricultural protectionism was necessary. The other course was to subject agriculture to the pressure of foreign competition and force it to produce more cheaply. Then the total yield would be bound to fall rapidly. It would have meant an increase in extensive agriculture, which would have brought the majority of the farms into the utmost difficulties and would therefore have entailed special transitional measures. One of these would have been the devaluation of the mark, another a wide measure of debt reduction.

But the agrarian policy which seemed to us ten years ago to be necessary was by no means confined to a better price level for agricultural produce; it also included the restoration and strengthening of the rural self-governing bodies and the encouragement of a characteristic rural education, different from the semieducation of the towns and based on the special rural environment. What seemed to us to be essential was the exact opposite of what the Weimar Republic did in its policy of rural education and self-administration. It is easy to see that from such a posi-

tion there was a temptation to place faith in the sham Nazi agrarian policy, with its slogan of "blood and soil." Here again Nazism turned its proclaimed principles inside out, but that is another story. It was only later that we found out that the Nazi Peasant Estate (Bauernstand) and National Food Estate (Reichsnährstand) were simply machinery for the total supervision and political subjection of the rural population and that the new communal system represented the complete destruction of the last vestiges of self-government. There were many who refused to admit this because they were unwilling to confess to themselves how greatly they had been deceived. But, in order to understand the motives which inspired leading agricultural circles in their support of Nazism, we must not proceed from actual developments but from the apprehensions of agrarian politicians, concerned for the future and not guided merely by questions of agricultural profit-making, in regard to the policy of the Weimar Republic. They feared a further flight from the land and a further dwindling of the peasant basis of the German nation. To try to counter this process merely by dividing up the big estates and settling peasants on them would be to put the bridle on the horse's tail.

How, you ask, with all these interests and occupations, did I land in politics? I simply do not know. I am not a politician either by inclination or by temperament. I did not "decide," following famous exemplars, to enter politics; I was forced into it because there was no one else available who was able and willing to take up certain tasks.

It was the absence of other persons suitable for the tasks that drove me, so to say, step by step into the open gaps. I entered politics by way of agrarian politics. At an earlier period I had been interested in questions of the Germans beyond the frontiers and overseas, the protection of minorities, and the rights of minorities, the first germs of a super-national order contained in the Paris treaties of peace. I was also concerned with the spiritual, religious side of our crisis. Through music, even at the time of estrangement, I had been in daily touch with the world of Christian believers.

I should like, by the way, to remove one more misunderstanding. I have been advertised as one of the closest intimates and a colleague for many years of Hitler. That is not the case. Up to now I have been unable to correct the misunderstanding. I entered the party in the summer of 1931. I did not meet Hitler until the beginning of 1932. The reasons why, nevertheless, I was able to give such intimate, and, as events proved, such accurate accounts of Hitler's stock of ideas were simply that, in the years before the Nazi seizure of power and in the first years after it, Hitler had an irrepressible urge to self-interpretation. His talkativeness with everybody he happened to meet was a nightmare to his entourage. Moreover, apart from himself, I was the only one who had Nazi foreign affairs to cope with, and to whom, therefore, he owed a candid revelation of his views on that subject. Perhaps I am entitled to assume that he was honestly concerned to secure my unquestioning allegiance.

My lack of political temperament and ambition may give

you more insight into my political purpose than my own attempts at explanation. But please do not jump to conclusions. It is not the explanation of my failure in practice. But it is perhaps an indication of the fact that the great crisis brought into the political arena elements that had shown no inclination until then of playing any active part in political life. Just as the masses of the lower middle class suddenly became interested in politics and crowded into Nazism, so sections of the educated class felt compelled to play their part in public life. It was not Nazism but necessity that made these classes politically minded and brought them into action—the necessity born of the inadequacy of the political leaders and the failure of essential problems to find a solution.

x

MONARCHISM

SMALL THINGS DETERMINE our decisions. Your approval consoles me for having troubled you with so much personal history. But it is difficult to say what it was that decided me to break away from Nazism. It was not an easy decision. It was, indeed, a dangerous one. I still have a clear memory of the afternoon in my garden on which I came to the resolve to break with the Nazis. I was sinking a well. The borehole was already over a hundred meters deep. We had not yet gone through the hard clay into a layer bearing fresh water. I watched the men hammering, and amid the rhythm of the strokes I debated the case for and against taking the step. It was my wife who determined my course. I make a point of mentioning this because with many of my acquaintances it was the wives who advised their husbands not to "expose" themselves or begged them to think of their families.

My wife was then expecting our youngest child, our eighth. Three had been snatched from us, one after another. I had good reason to think of my wife. You will understand such personal experiences as that make it im-

possible for me to blame those who came to different decisions from mine.

It was clear to me at the time that this break with the party would certainly cost me my property and perhaps my life. I knew that I was heading for times of financial difficulty. That, with four young children and an expected fifth, was a grave problem. I could not have taken the decisive step against the slightest objection from my wife.

I must admit that I did not realize how difficult the future was actually to be. If I had known all that this step was to involve for us, perhaps I should have recoiled from it. Please remember, my friend, that in spite of my opposition I still had the chance of arriving at a *modus vivendi* with the party. I bore the full burden of a free decision. Nobody can deny that it is harder to abandon one's country, one's property, one's future, of one's own free will than if there is no alternative.

For a year after my second flight from Danzig, in the autumn of 1936, my wife carried on our farm alone. I wanted to try to keep it for my son. Finally we were compelled by boycotting to sell it after all. We were shut out of all the breeders' organizations. No one bought the young animals we bred. We could get no laborers; the farm was outlawed. It was suggested to my wife that she should divorce me; then she would be allowed to carry on the farm undisturbed. She appealed to the Court of Honor of the Chamber of Farmers, which I had myself founded, for readmission to the breeders' association; the court rejected the appeal on the ground that I was staying

with her parents and the court must, therefore, infer that my wife shared my views.

How many have had the same and worse things to endure! I had, indeed, narrow escapes from several attacks on my life. One attempt, in Berlin, I evaded by leaving from a different station than the usual one. I was to have been taken to a "sanatorium." I escaped from an attempted assassination in the woods above Danzig through a warning that came from a woman closely associated with a Nazi in a high position. A German military officer saved me from an attempt on my life on the seashore.

These things are dramatic for those not involved in them only when they end fatally. For those concerned they are dramatic enough without that. One must be able to lose one's luggage several times in life, said no other than our great statesman of Napoleonic times, Freiherr von Stein.

To describe to you, my friend, how we gradually lost sympathy with National Socialism, and how we turned from supporters into opponents, is beyond my power. I have a few notes on that year of our decisions, and letters to friends and their replies. But it is difficult to get back in imagination to that troubled world of hopes and anxieties and of readiness to place the best interpretation on everything. There were the first doubts, suppressed as they arose. Unexpected elements were discovered to be at work. What I had taken for mere braggadocio in the party leader, in Hitler's speeches and his statements of his ideas, proved to be spoken in earnest. But a universal cynicism and moral indifference had found their way through every

crevice into a society which had been regarded as honorable. What do you think must the effect on us be of the total moral collapse of the middle classes, the liberal middle classes that until then had proudly borne the banner of democracy?

It was not only National Socialism that had dropped the mask; the whole middle class revealed its total loss of standards. Thus in our feelings and judgments we were torn this way and that. It was not a simple process of adjustment. We went from dismay at the growing revelation of the true character of Nazism to disappointment at the absolute moral indifference of all sections of society. The race for the fat jobs! The hysterical struggle to remain at all costs on top and not to be pushed down among the masses! The terror of attracting attention as a dissident! This last produced such extraordinary exhibitions of human weakness that much of what Nazism was doing escaped attention.

I have often told you how before 1933 we in the north looked upon Hitler more or less as a comic figure. North German National Socialism was created by Gregor Strasser, Hitler's rival, a very different man. I must mention here that efforts were made from some quarters, after the real character of the movement had been realized, to try at least to turn it into decent paths. There were several centers of effort on these lines. I came into touch with some of them. All I could attempt to do was to align our efforts in Danzig with these German ones. Many of them con-

flicted with one another, but certain things remained practicable.

We had to prevent the outbreak of fresh revolutionary enterprises. Any new upheaval, so soon after the Nazi rising, seemed to us extremely perilous. We could not permit all the chaotic conditions through which we had just passed, with a wave of lawless activities "by right of the revolution," to come once more, this time in some other direction. Our enterprise must therefore have the character of a logical pursuit of the existing course, while making an end of the transitory state of revolution and entering a new period of constitutionalism. This was the more necessary owing to the pressure of urgent issues in our foreign relations.

This could only mean that the continuity of developments, as the phrase ran, must be preserved. How that was to be done was a question on which there were considerable differences of opinion. The most plausible solution was to set up a corporative state, or, as we called it at the time, a "federal order." Opinions differed greatly as to what was to be understood by that, but some excellent preliminary work was done on the subject. I had the privilege of coming into close touch with one of the foremost experts in this field. I shared the view then that the only remedy lay in a corporative order. I have already written to you about my conception of it. One thing above all argued in favor of such an order—the fact that any immediate restoration of uncontrolled trade and industry was inconceivable. Other problems which at the time were far

from being solved made that solution desirable. The problem of rearment also made it necessary to develop organs of stronger economic and social control.

The other question was that of the Nazi leaders. It was regarded as beyond question that the party must be dissolved. It had "fulfilled its historic mission." It was now superfluous. It must dissolve at the historic moment at which the party-state was finally abolished and the new corporative order took shape. The regime of a party could never have more than a transitory character. It could only be regarded as the temporary commissioning of a group of persons as mandatories of the whole people for the production of a new constitutional order.

On the other hand, many of the leading persons must be got rid of. For a large part of our criticism was directed, and rightly directed, against these men, who were of an entirely different caste to that needed for building up a state. But where should the elimination come to an end; who must be taken over in order to make, through their personalities, a plausible show of continuity?

There began then among the dissident Nazis similar discussions to those of the time when it was being asked outside Germany with whom it would be possible to conclude peace. There was an important body of opinion in favor of Hitler. Without his person, many said, it would be impossible to avoid giving the masses the feeling that there had been a break in developments. It was claimed that Hitler was elastic enough to adjust himself to a new situation. His unquestioned popularity would greatly assist the

enterprise. Others contended that Hitler was the very man who was primarily responsible for the wrong direction taken. They favored Gregor Strasser, his antithesis.

I confess that I was no longer able to decide in favor of either view. Gregor Strasser had impressed me incomparably more than Hitler. Strasser was a man of broad and generous outlook, but was at times insufficiently self-controlled, a man of primitive instincts. He certainly lacked the daemonic character. But was he not perhaps without any sort of genuinely creative gift?

Who in Germany could arrest the march to perdition, if it could be stopped at all? Only the men who had the technical means of doing so. Certainly not the workers or the masses of the town proletariat at the barricades. Among the German *émigrés* there were men who were continually trying to paint wishful pictures of that sort against the dark horizon. (They did not include the Social Democrats, whose monthly analyses were distinguished by their sober and factual realism.) Others regarded the signs of economic disintegration as so important that from 1933 on they were continually prophesying the collapse of the autarchist system, and therewith the decisive blow against the regime, as immediately impending. In reality, as everyone familiar with the situation from the inside knew, the regime could not be overthrown on economic grounds alone. So long as the machinery of total domination remained in the hands of the Nazi clique and was ruthlessly worked by it, all economic troubles had relatively little to do with the matter.

Only an element with actual power could intervene. The automatism of economic and social processes does not lend itself to a revolution. In this point the Marxist conception of history required correction on the strength of the actual course of events. The workers were no longer an element with actual power. Apart from the Nazi party there was only one such element, the army, and the government authorities associated with it. If the fatal drive to war was to be prevented—and I think this was the universal and overwhelming desire until the summer of 1939—there remained only one recourse, to win over that element of power in Germany to the overthrow of the regime. There was not much likelihood of success in that enterprise—who could fail to realize it? But was it not at least worth attempting? What I wrote in *The Revolution of Nihilism* about action on the part of the army and a restoration of the monarchy in Germany is to be understood in that sense, and *in that sense alone*.

The army, in any case, had not the slightest desire for a dictatorship of long duration. What there was reason to fear was not that but the opposite—the army's formalist repudiation of all responsibility and concentration on purely military matters. This latter is what has happened thus far during the present war. The military leaders have done the same as their civil colleagues in the administration. If they disagreed with the *Führer* they "placed on record" a formal protest, salving their conscience and considering themselves "justified in the fact of history."

Military action against the Nazi regime would not have

produced a new and in external relations more dangerous tyranny but would have brought back into activity the political forces that had been paralyzed by the existing totalitarian tyranny. A military dictatorship could never have stopped at the point of the assumption of total power. It would have led irresistibly to a new state of constitutionalism. No one was more alive to that fact than the military leaders, and it was one of the difficulties they foresaw, since they could see no live political elements on which they could have relied. It was only logical that, if orderly but freer conditions could in any way be restored without a catastrophe, there must be some authority at the center of the process. It must, moreover, be a genuine authority, that could be opposed to the pseudo-authority of the Caesarian mass-tyranny. A stable order could be secured only if, instead of the resuscitation of a mythical past, there were a return to the genuine standards of a Western European and German tradition. That meant nothing less than the restoration of the Christian character of our state and of social life; and, in our German conditions, which in this respect are not at all to be regarded as typical, it meant a return to the political elements of the monarchy.

Few people in the great Western democracies will be prepared to agree with this line of thought, but for us Germans this is a matter of practical necessity. The question of the monarchy is not one of sentiment or emotion but of simple logic. We lack, above all, certain elementary conditions with which no experience can endow us but which are a matter of innate qualities. I am not referring

to military or warlike character. I refer to the incapacity to achieve a balance of active forces, a balance which does not mean simply enervation and torpor but a continually and automatically restored tension between active elements, none of which can claim predominance. It was precisely our so-called parliamentary life that led to the worst conceivable absolutism. It was the immediate predecessor of Caesarian totalism. The division of power had become a fiction. We lack all balance of autonomous elements; if we have any they work destructively and stand in the way of the necessary conciliation in a higher unity. This conciliation, at the state of historical development which we have reached, cannot be separated from a person who exercises that function, a person of unquestioned authority. In accordance with our past tradition, which nothing can replace, this person is the king.

In Germany the restoration of the monarchy was not the concern of a class, any more than a revision of socialism will be. But the monarchy cannot simply be proclaimed. It must become, of its own accord, a political factor independent both of party and tyranny, against both the destruction of moral and spiritual standards and the massing of the people into a proletariat, and in favor of the Christian, Western tradition. Restoration would be impossible as an artificial expedient. It could not be suddenly decreed. It must fight its own way.

What was to be feared has happened—no member of any royal house of the German Reich has come forward as a leader. All have kept silent. Silence in such a case is capit-

ulation, even with clenched fists or with cynical remarks about tribunes of the people. That is the attitude of the small man in his impotence. For the man who would lead, the time is bound to come, sooner or later, when he must throw his whole personality into the scales and be ready for sacrifice.

Even if a Pretender had been ready for that sacrifice, the restoration of even a single one of the leading princely houses would be difficult, now that war has come. It should have been the task of one of those houses to prevent war, leading a movement for the restoration of power, freedom, and peace.

You will object that twenty-five years ago the monarchy in Germany was the opposite of a stabilizing element. That is undeniable. At all events, no one who is familiar with the underlying motives of the unhappy course pursued will deny it. I should like, however, to point out one thing. The monarchy has learned the lesson of the events that led up to the last war. The totalitarian tyranny has not; and the pseudo-parliamentary mass-state can never learn it, since that institution is by nature irresponsible and without any memory. Only a monarchical tradition or a highly developed democratic tradition has the faculty of memory, which prevents it from throwing overboard the lessons of experience within a generation or two. The latter tradition we do not possess. We have only the former one. Its restoration thus seemed to me, and to many with me, to be the indispensable centerpiece of the pacification of Europe.

But there is another thing to be borne in mind. The

section of the army and of the administration in Germany that would have been ready to work actively against Nazism consisted of elements by whom the monarchical tradition was valued and in whose eyes it was a guarantee of a Christian, humane ethic. The monarchy could only have gained powers of conciliation in that spirit. Merely as an instrument of political and social conciliation, it would soon have exhausted its power for good. The most difficult task in the pacification of the German people, the education of its desperate youth, could only be achieved in the Christian and humane spirit. I have devoted a few words to the question why a secularized humanism cannot do this in the little essay¹ you have seen. The army, too, was capable of service to the renascence of Germany only if those possessed of the highest authority discountenanced the cynical materialism which has found such eminent support in the new army.

No one will deny that the German army leaders must bear their share of the blame for what has happened in Germany. Their share of blame, and certainly the chief responsibility for its beginning. I do not think anyone will charge me with not having admitted this responsibility or with having made any attempt to shift the burden of responsibility from the army authorities to the Nazi party. I need only refer to the middle section of *The Revolution of Nihilism* in its original version. This brings me, however, to a point which I should like to set right. I refer to the question how far we may expect that even today the mon-

¹ *The Christian Commonwealth* (an unpublished pamphlet).

archy and the intervention of army leaders might influence the liquidation of the war. I counted, indeed, on the intervention of elements in Germany that had remained sound at the beginning of the war. I had good reason for doing so. Since then I have imposed on myself the reserve dictated by my situation in this country and my German nationality. In particular I have had nothing to do with the wild idea of regarding Göring as a man suited for taking Hitler's place and guaranteeing a lasting peace. Göring, of all men, with his false heartiness, his loud professions of patriotism, his mixture of sentimentality and ferocity, his sunny nature, a huntsman—and what an evil specimen of humanity a hunter can be!—a man who lives and lets live (surely nobody who so enjoys life, people will say, can be evil-hearted), a jovial man, a fat man ("Let me have men about me that are fat"), a man who loves decorations, no ascetic, a brave man, a flyer, even a man with a full nursery. It was not I who nourished that fantastic idea; nor can any of the whispering that we must make peace, only so can the Hitler regime be brought down, be charged against me. Perhaps the mouthpieces of that sort of talk should be sought nearer the company of those critics who did their best to belittle and discount as fancy the things I wrote a year ago about the true aims of Nazism.

You must picture all our struggles in Germany to distinguish truth from lying and right from wrong amid universal confusion and a host of conflicting and shifting circumstances. You must remember that at that time we were not sure of anybody. The masses were an unknown

factor; no one could hope to achieve any close estimate of the revolutionary forces of Nazism. And political decisions were not discussed or made in personal safety as in this country.

Moreover, every decision under these tyrannies requires a gradual departure from habitual ideas of honor and patriotism. Only a desperado can light-heartedly ignore all these things as bourgeois conventions.

I should like also to meet your objection that, while my last letter gave you some enlightening personal details, the "Rauschning case" was not typical at all but exceptional. From my knowledge of conditions within Germany I must deny that. Not many have had any opportunity to bring their change of opinion to public notice, and few are under any obligation to do so. In this field there are what might be called vicarious activities. The actual process, the weaning from Nazism, has been universal. One day the last veil will fall, and the world will see how little solidity there has been in this Nazi regime for years.

There is a specially horrible feature about these modern tyrannies: the personal martyrdoms bear no witness. They remain unknown, or the world is deliberately unreceptive of their message. It does not want to hear about these sacrifices. I think this is a weakness that in these last years has not been confined to Germany and the German people.

OPPOSITION TO WEIMAR

YOU HAVE REPEATED a reproach which I thought I had answered already. Democracy is not a political doctrine but an ethical attitude. I will express myself more precisely. The political doctrine of democracy and a democratic constitution are but gossamers that can be destroyed with a breath if their basis is not an ethical agreement to exclude or to use certain expedients in the political struggle.

There is not the slightest need for any profound investigation concerning the weaknesses of the German democracy. The weak point lies here. Our democratic constitution was certainly a well-constructed legal edifice. Our political life recognized the democratic doctrine. But the practice of all the parties was undemocratic because they were under the pressure of a new revolutionary life that took firmer hold of us in our defeat, and in the shocks of the economic and social disintegration of the inflation period, than of any other nation.

It was a fatal element in our development as a nation that we only achieved a democratic form of political life at the moment when democracy, as a vital element, an ethos, entered upon a crisis and the institutions of political life,

even in some of the old and tried democracies, did not withstand the test of the new political developments.

Democracy, if I rightly understand it, is a balance of forces. Not a static equilibrium, but one which has constantly to be freshly achieved. It is the balance resulting from continual discussion. This involves readiness to recognize other forces than those one represents. It is undemocratic to try to reject the claim of other elements to exist. There must also be readiness to include in the balance forces which represent no more than a small minority.

All this you know better than I do. I must admit that I only realized when I came to this country how vastly different a mental environment it presupposes. In discussing questions of this sort I was simply not understood at first, so much is it a matter of course in this country that a practical political decision is always the combination of many individual elements in a compromise. But can democracy work where such a political understanding has not yet become actually part of men's lives? Can it work among a people that has undergone the sudden transition from an authoritarian monarchy to a mass-collectivity state?

I will try once more to make it more intelligible to you why we could not regard the German Republic, the "Weimar system," as an effective first step in German democracy. I can only do it with a few indications, and I am afraid that it may not convince you. We look back now on those years from a time of such confusion that they are bound to seem to us to be simply transfigured.

There is no question that in comparison with present conditions they may well seem absolutely ideal. But the better is not only the enemy of the good, the worse is often the rehabilitation of the bad. Let us avoid that error.

Carry yourself back to those years after the Armistice. You were in Germany soon after the conclusion of peace. You remember our anxieties. There were the acute ones—the peace treaty, some of the terms of which were hardly durable; Reparations; the intrinsic weakness of our political life; then, later, unemployment, the agrarian crisis, and those internecine conflicts of parties with no political tradition and not even an established routine. There was the decay of the state as the guardian of public order, its capitulation to the mob, and, on the other side, the continual extension of the sphere of the state into new regions.

There were the disturbing signs of a new time—the masses, the growing collectivism, the growing primitiveness, the decline in spiritual standards, the sequelae of the more and more radical technical revolution, the change in men, the mechanization of life, the growth of gigantic industrial organizations. There were also the material changes, the efficacy of the new instruments of power, the senselessness of small territorial systems, the dwindling of space and time. There were the new means of amusement and edification, permitting an undreamed-of influencing of the subconscious mind of the masses. These means of amusement—wireless, cinema, sport, and so on—turned into means of domination for those who could manipulate them.

Finally there was the progressive spiritual decay, the destruction of all accepted valuations and standards. There emerged plainly out of the loss of authority of all standards a new epoch, a post-Christian age. Christianity had lost its position of authority. Amid this spiritual change everything became subject to challenge—political tradition, the constitutional order, social solidarity, and positive legality. Science and art became problematical. An immense revolution seemed to be breaking out, and a large part of the world seemed to be ready to throw itself into its arms in a passion of destruction and iconoclasm.

I want to avoid any sort of harshness, especially in regard to persons, in what I have to say further on this subject. I entirely agree that the men responsible for the regime during those fourteen years were deserving personally of all honor, from their political opponents as from anyone else; this is, above all, their due today, when their unquestionable good will has brought them a cruel fate. I recommend to you the book by Otto Braun, the former Social Democratic Prime Minister of Prussia—his reminiscences. It is a very revealing book, both positively and negatively. A book that deserves respect. Its author is a truly honorable and upright man of the finest caste. Personally, I feel particularly grateful for his tribute to Prussianism, of which a man like Braun is a representative in the best sense, although he was neither a *Junker* nor a militarist but a simple workman. A beautiful book, bearing witness to the nobility of mind and the honesty and straightforwardness of a class of the population that strives, amid hard struggles

and privations, after a brighter life. But in this very book it becomes clear why all this failed, this new democracy in Germany. Braun complains of lack of understanding. Ay, but that was just the difficulty. Can the masses ever have understanding? That was the whole problem in that decade—the incorporation of the masses, as they actually are, in the form of a democracy. Of all these deeper questions, the question of the precariousness of our whole political and social situation, the inevitability of certain developments, this great realist and man of sound natural intelligence has no understanding. These masses had escaped, not only from their “tyrants,” but from their leaders. Ghastly problems had emerged and had been shelved. Were demagogic methods to be adopted in order to retain hold of the masses? Was the sound path of instruction and intimate guidance by a staff of professional leaders to be abandoned, and new revolutionary paths entered on? Here was a man who, although a Marxist, took democracy seriously. Here was a great opportunity of proving that democracy is not bound up with the conception of the middle class. But this man’s energies were exhausted in the unceasing daily tasks of the political struggle.

How disarming this name “Weimar” is with the good will behind it, and yet how mistaken! As if a new course could be decreed, as if the existing reality of Potsdam, that center of the building up of history and the formation of the state, could be set aside by a fiction! What was Weimar? A seat of the Muses. A proclamation, a preamble to

the constitution—all that, but with no solid content and no binding force.

It might well have been able to gain solidity. But instead of that there developed the chaotic conditions of a progressive disintegration, and, in fact, tendencies of political and intellectual development that had nothing to do with the old Weimar and humanism, with Goethe and human liberty. Whether it was meant to be or not, it was the first great delusion, the first really great slogan that led men away from reality.

It was not so much of what Weimar was that we were afraid, as of what that regime was bound to lead to. It had something in it of the quality of the Kerensky epoch. It was a transition period, a prelude—to what?

That was our anxiety. Prelude to total dissolution and paralysis? Or prelude to a total centralization and uniformity? It was not we who wanted an era of tyranny. But that seemed to us the logical and inevitable consequence of mass-democracy. Or, if it was avoided, must it not be at the price of a state of progressive disintegration and decay? Total paralysis or total centralization—that was the dilemma.

Remember our crisis in jurisprudence! The path along which the German Republic was virtually forced led straight to where Nazism now is. There is one point that I should like to give special mention: the rejection or depreciation of natural right as a sort of ethic that has no place among the objective standards of positive law. More hangs upon that rejection than may seem to at first sight.

At its back is all the positivist realism that is but a prelude to nihilism. On that principle it is simply and purely the "will" that finds expression in legislation, the will of the legislator, who may be a legislative body but may equally well be a dictator in its place. Legal positivism rejects as irrelevant the question whether a law is right or wrong by the standards of natural right. That which owes its formal origin to legislation makes up positive law.)

This determines the attitude of the judge. He regards his function as not to interpret the law on his own responsibility on the basis of natural right, frequently giving a very free interpretation for the sake of justice, but to try to fit the particular case into an appropriate article of the law. Under this process one of the most essential functions in public life, the clear division between the powers of legislator and judge, disappears entirely or almost entirely. The judge becomes a functionary of the legislator. The first step to the totalitarian state has been made in the most intimate sphere of the constitutional state.

I cannot go further into the questions of the meaning of the general articles of the constitution. They were interpreted as "programmatic declarations," not as binding principles. If one wanted to get away from these confusions, one was led inevitably to the recognition of a basis of natural right in political jurisprudence. Was that possible in the temper of an environment that was no longer ready or able to recognize fixed principles? How greatly this whole process contributed to the Nazi confusion of ideas and the

capitulation of the judges before the dictator's demands is easy to see today.

We saw an analogous mistaken tendency in the development of the state. The state, in spite of its occasional weaknesses, was assuming direct control over one field of life after another. The characteristic feature of the chaotic early years of the republic was a progressive state enterprise, and no sphere of life remained untouched by it. The state lost its "subsidiary character" and was already claiming total control. The germ of the modern totalitarian state existed already in the German Republic.

The Weimar state was certainly the most complete form of liberal-democratic constitutional state, with its guarantee of freedom of thought and of expression of opinion. But at the same time this very state became the starting point for a development in the opposite direction, that of dictatorship, in which, under gentle or rough forms of compulsion, movement was permitted only in one direction.

There was, further, a tendency in the development of the republic which was only logical as soon as the example of the "*République une et indivisible*" was followed. This was the tendency in the direction of a centralist, unified German state. The federal state was an anachronism in the political climate of national democracy. It is true that the constitution of the republic had tried to preserve the federal character of the state. But realities claimed and secured attention, and compelled movement in the direction of the removal of the "privileges" of the *Landes*, the federal states. The conflict between Prussia and the Reich which has

brought so much unrest into our political life could be settled only if a new equilibrium were established between the federal members of the Reich; and that meant a limitation of Prussian predominance. The consequence was a stronger expression of the federal character of the Reich. The political quarters in which that development was effectually opposed are not to be sought in Prussia; there had been opposition in Prussia to the reduction of its territory or its predominance, but it would not have been insuperable. The crucial opposition came from the army, the Socialist trade unions, and controlling elements in the Catholic Center party, who united in rejecting any decentralization of the Reich or formation of a clear federation. Their motives were obvious. Liberal industrialists also saw in the development in the direction of a centralist unified state a logical step that was both reasonable and progressive.

Was it? In all serious conservative quarters a centralist Germany, in which the federal states were reduced to historical and cultural requisites for holiday celebrations, while a stereotyped provincial system on the model of the French *départements* enforced a rigidly unified administration, was bound to be regarded as a final and revolutionary breach with the past. The action the Nazis took, with the radicalism of a sort of German Jacobins, in their enforcement of uniformity on their principle of *Gleichschaltung*, was, after all, nothing more than the brutal but logical completion of a development which had already been forcing its way under the republic.

If one regarded the federal character of the Reich merely

from the aspect of "expediency" or of finance or of the out-lived historic tradition, one could not fail to be in favor of unification. The considerations that appealed to the Socialist trade unions and the army lay in the stronger concentration of power which a unified state made possible. For similar reasons great industrial groups were in favor of a unified state on the French model. The industrialists who looked on Hugenberg as their leader judged the question from the point of view of the concentration of their own resources.

The confusion of mind that has led to the present catastrophe is well shown in the fact that the democracies of the West were entirely unable to determine which of the alternative developments in the Reich would serve peace. Certainly the federal character of the Reich was a better guarantee of peace than certain useless institutions of League of Nations diplomacy. But how could the Western powers, which dictated the Paris treaties, be in a position to see amid their sense of the victory of the national democratic idea that in Germany this idea would be bound to lead logically to a centralist Greater Germany and to a form of German Jacobinism with its revolutionary claims to expansion? Nazism, my dear friend, whether today you are ready to recognize the fact or not (I say this though I am fully aware of its reversal of the general view in your country), is *the victory of the national democratic idea in Germany*.

It was difficult for your politicians, and still more for the French, to see that it would have been in your own

interest and in that of Europe to support genuine conservative elements in Germany. The idea of the national state was the lasting outcome of the French Revolution, and thus the platform on which you had set up the new order. The great federative order of the Hapsburg monarchy, which could have found a new internal equilibrium of forces after temporary disturbances, had been destroyed, and in its place centralist nation-states had been created, in which, under the motto "*une et indivisible*," all these ideas of the "state-nation" and the minorities, with their fatal consequences, led directly to the tension that preceded the present war.

My dear friend, it was we who were in advance of the times. The creators of the Versailles system had set up an order that carried into practice the ideas of the nineteenth and not of the twentieth century, and in Germany the creators of the Weimar Constitution did precisely the same thing. The same considerations that determined us as conservatives to oppose that order, and to advocate a federative state within Germany, compelled us in our foreign policy to combat the new order of national states. Both attitudes were the outcome of the same principle: that of advocacy of a European order without the "protection of minorities" clause (which has well been described as an article "for the prevention of cruelty to animals")—an effectual placing of all *nations* on an equal footing in a common decentralized order, making use of the political elements of every sort of self-government. Let us not forget that in the new national democratic states there was a

political monopoly for a so-called "state-people," from which other national groups were excluded. On the Continent Switzerland alone had retained and developed all the things that seemed to us to be essential for the future. She had succeeded in uniting the elements of tradition with the great modern spirit of independence. She proved that conservative and liberal are not opposing but complementary elements.

A well-known statesman, now living in exile, has offered for the tragic developments in his country the excuse that it took Switzerland three hundred years to achieve her free cantonal constitution. The reply to that is that it was not the lack of three hundred years but of the right basis that plunged his country into the fatal courses of these last twenty years.

In our circles there was frequent talk of the necessity of a "federal" state. The state—if that term may be used—should become, we thought, a balance of various autonomous powers. It should be a federation, not only of territorial members, but of all sorts of fields of activity, such as church, trade, and industry, science and social organizations, which should have certain definite spheres of sovereignty delegated to them by the whole. The federative element was to be of two kinds. The internal political order would already be federative, depending on autonomous members. The state would not integrate each individual; the individual, belonging to several fields, would be indirectly incorporated from several sides. This was certainly an entirely different form of existence from that

which the liberal constitutional states had molded as heirs of the French Revolution. It seemed to us that this was the only way in which the masses could be articulated and at the same time a totalitarian absolutism avoided.

But let us not discuss how far we were in error in these ideas. We were obviously in error, since we had gone to extremes in our new direction. I will only ask you whether such ideas were criminal or insane or hostile to Western civilization, whether they were barbaric, whether they were fresh monstrosities proceeding from the poisonous Prussian militarism? I think the answer is obvious. Such ideas were virtually bound to suggest themselves. Only practical experience could reveal how far such remedies only added to the destruction if they claimed exclusive validity.

These autonomous bodies, as I have already indicated, were to be the framework of economic self-government. What was the economic policy of the Weimar Republic? I will confine myself to mentioning what in my view was the essential feature of the situation at that time. The republic was in favor of independent private enterprise. In its economic policy it was liberal. But the crisis and internal social tendencies were unceasingly driving it in the direction of economic planning, of an *integrale économie dirigée*.

I will not enter into the many questions of detail. Unemployment, Reparations, industrial works in difficulties, currency, agrarian policy—all these were outstanding problems contributing to the state of crisis. It has been suspected

that with a little patience they could have been mastered.

I will not contest that. But I doubt whether patience alone would have sufficed without the application of the appropriate remedies. Had we clear ideas of those? The great problems lay, not only in the method of providing employment—whether by big public works or by stimulating private enterprise—but in the question whether to end or extend the protection of industry, whether to dissolve or expand the monopolies. The Weimar regime, under the pressure of the crisis, proceeded with giant strides along the path of industrial centralization, the nationalization of existing monopolies, and a monopolist system in the principal branches of industry. State management and the protection of industry are unquestionably elements in the growth of a form of absolutism. The totalitarian state must automatically grow alike out of the nationalization of trade and industry and out of the nationalization of social services. A “state of social services” must also inescapably end in a new form of the totalitarian state. I am tempted to describe this as totalitarian democracy. It has not yet actually made its appearance, but it is a danger that may face us in the future. At that time we regarded its appearance as almost inevitable.

How could state intervention be avoided? And if there were no avoiding it, what possibility was there of avoiding its development into a system of total economic planning? Is it possible, as is again and again asserted, to have spheres of private industry, and spheres of controlled industry alongside them? It would be possible, if at all, only with

the exercise of the greatest circumspection and authority. In Germany circumspection ends as soon as politics approach the "conflict of ideas." There was no avoiding it there.

Prevention of destructive price disturbances and trade stagnation could only be attained by intervention. What is protection from crises but permanent intervention? But the question is what it is that intervenes. Could not some other authority intervene instead of the state? An authority possessing the sovereign rights of the state for this purpose, but not in a position to make any political misuse of them? This was the point at which we were considering how to develop new forms of organized mutual help in industry through the creation of autonomous associations.

The attainment of a certain stability and a lasting basis of calculation simply meant the regulation of production and the restriction of competition. Were not these things endurable if they were organized by industry itself and not by the state? Would this not at least obviate the destructive state control, the exploitation of industry as a means of furthering the domination of the state?

Once industry came into the hands of the state, it was difficult to liberate it and restore its independence. Neo-liberalism, neo-socialism and neo-corporativism moved not only in the field of theory; they were largely identical in the practical remedies proposed. I have already given an example. There was a sort of united front of liberalism, non-Marxist socialism, and corporativism against state control. Or, rather, there should have been; for this united

front did not become a political force because the two first were more drawn to the state than to corporativism and were inclined to regard it as an instrument of their own tendencies and not an adversary. The irony of our situation lay in the readiness of every political element to conclude an alliance with its absolute antithesis. Liberalism still saw in the state a liberal constitutional state which scarcely existed any longer. Socialism saw in it a machinery with which it could carry out its special aims.

I must devote at least a few words to a line of thought which seems to me to have played an important part in some fatal decisions. To put it brutally—Nazism carried out many things which Marxist socialism considered necessary in Germany but had not ventured to carry out itself because it did not trust itself to use the means for doing so. Their execution had therefore been left to a legendary process of development which need only be cautiously encouraged in order to produce what, after all, came to the same thing in the end, the dictatorship of the proletariat. There was, indeed, a measure of truth in these ideas. If things were left to themselves they would be bound to end in the critical state which Marx had diagnosed as the end of the bourgeois epoch—the concentration of capital and of the means of production, which would rapidly pass under the control of the state—general impoverishment, the disintegration of the bourgeois classes, especially the lower middle class, and the proletarianization of agriculture. From the Marxist standpoint there seemed no weakness in bringing the state into this process of self-

liquidation of the liberal industrial system and society, because there was a prospect of coming, before long, by political means into legitimate possession of the power of the state. When the state of dissolution of the older elements of the social order was far enough advanced, the radical Socialist revolution could be carried out, and the last forms of capitalism liquidated without the pains of revolutionary intervention and without resistance from the disappearing *bourgeoisie*.

There is no question that the ideas of intelligent Marxists, and especially of the younger ones, were moving in this direction. We had good reason to fear this future for which they hoped. Perhaps our fear was exaggerated because we did not realize how little activity there was at the back of these Socialist ideas. This first became plain at the time of the Papen *coup d'état* of 1932. But this activity might suddenly have begun at any time; thus we cannot be blamed for our mistake. We anxiously watched the progressive crumbling of the social structure of our nation, which had suffered an irreparable blow in the inflation.

We had not the upper class of society which should, at the same time, have been the class of intellectual leaders and would so have been able to justify its claim to political leadership. Above all, we had no middle class. The destruction of the middle class in its two forms of prosperous and lower middle class was, indeed, not actually the work of the inflation and of defeat in war; it had begun from within before the war. After the inflation it rapidly

became manifest. There began the reduction of the Germans to mass conditions. The loss of firm lines of demarcation among a people, which, in any case, has its contradictory or ill-defined elements, could not fail to result in moral deterioration. The rising member of the middle class did not grow into an upper class that formed him and instilled new obligations into him. He became uprooted and an element in disintegration. The impoverished members of the middle class could only sink into the masses and lose the last signs of individual quality.

Thus there came a leveling of the articulated nation into a structureless mass-collective long before Nazism came, an irresistible process which Nazism disastrously accelerated.

Was that process really irresistible? To this question, too, we applied our thoughts and efforts. We tried, as already mentioned, to introduce new organs of mutual aid and self-government, and, above all, suitable training. I come here to a factor that brought us into strong opposition to the Weimar state—its system and ideal of education.

I am compelled to make a bitter remark to you. Over there, across the Channel, a whole nation had lost its moral and intellectual foundation. It was delivering itself up to the most atrocious substitutes, to a world of substitutes that permitted it to cast aside all the moral inhibitions of civilized life. But what was responsible for that state of things? The few postwar years and the mass propaganda of this one party of Nazism? That is a grotesque shifting of responsibility. Is it really imagined that that is the ex-

planation of what has happened in Germany? For three generations, 90 years, and, indeed, for 150 or 200 years, a so-called "free" man has been trained up. For ninety years the "materialist conception of history" has worked hard to spread among the masses its shallow, stupid materialism and to praise this as progress. For three generations the political Left Wing in Germany has been at work to destroy Christianity, and now do they want to disown their product? It *is* their product.

This secularization of life, this escape from genuine authorities in the name of a reason which has grown into a tyrant, this transfer of all authority to a this-worldly god, the "state," whether it is the nation that has thus been made absolute by the liberal *bourgeoisie* or the working class by Marxist socialism, or whether the authorized representatives of the German *bourgeoisie* have raised their libidinous libertinage to a substitute for religion—this whole herostratic movement, extending now to the greatest minds, Nietzsche and Stefan George, has *here* its ripe fruit! the Nazi man!

Everything in our country that for a hundred years past has been regarded as progressive, independent, liberal, socialistic will be unable to deny the historic fact of its responsibility for the new German man. In this country of ours pleasure and satisfaction have been found in contemptuously rejecting every tradition as stuff for the backwoodsman. With self-opinionated arrogance only the things that evade and disintegrate have been recognized as of the "intellect"—until the irrational elements in man have

sprung at the throat of that proud “intellectualism” in the most appalling incarnation of evil.

The prototype of this “spirit” in the Weimar state was the *Zivilisationsliterat*, as he was called in Germany, that prophet of the mechanized life. The element in him that disgusted us was his insincerity. He affected to be a defender of a civilization which, incidentally, alone made his existence possible, but he did nothing except destroy the foundations of that civilization. It was he who, in his glorification of a cynical life of indulgence, had been disparaging “inhibitions” since that famous phrase “emancipation of the flesh” gained currency. It is true that he had nothing to do with National Socialism. He saw its barbaric quality. But why did he not see the barbarism in his own deplorable ways, destructive and self-destructive? All this disintegrating analysis really cleared the way for the new barbarism, ignoring the fact that it is the spirit that creates obligations and makes decisions necessary.

Why literature in Germany was an affair of the Left is a question that leads us, however, to a fact that cannot be set to the discredit of the Left Wing—our own omission to fulfill our task of preserving the continuity of our intellectual and political tradition. It was precisely this that made it so difficult in Germany to form an intellectual upper class that was also political, or vice versa. Even before the first world war the German social upper class had virtually lost all cultural importance. It had no real connection with intellectual life, and thus set an example that had its effect on all other classes and especially on the middle class, which

devoted its whole mind to business success and made that the criterion of social advance. Any interest in the things of the mind was regarded by our political upper class as more or less suspect.

That is how it was possible for the void to be filled in Germany by a fluctuating, irresponsible class of intellectuals who made business in the things of the mind the affair of the Left. This continued for two or three generations. Literature became antibourgeois. Its subject was the human element in a decaying order, its aim the further unmasking of man.

The standardization and the state control of education under the Weimar regime, and its progressive de-Christianization, were features that, in our view, were of evil omen for the German nation. All the efforts at school reform, the admirable technical equipment of the schools, the care with which the whole subject of education was treated could not weaken the objection that a spineless humanism and a precocious intellectualism were being cultivated and inevitably a true education was missed. I shall not be committing an injustice if I say that in this field Nazism was anticipated—in the enterprise of forming a new type of man, not a Christian as in the past, but a citizen of the coming society. The Nazi method was there in all but the name. Men were being “planned.” For the new order of society had systematically to be prepared on the intellectual as well as the material side.

It was logical to make the effort. The hopelessness of every attempt—hitherto entirely utopian—at a planned and

reasoned order of society lay, of course, in the individual himself, whether leader or led; he was expected suddenly to form a new social order with all the instincts and passions of his past still dominating him. Thus it would have been necessary to form a new man in reserve for a coming new order if this order had not emerged amid the upheavals of the transition period.

After the experience of that terrible war and all that followed it, it was impossible for us to take kindly to the optimism of such bourgeois liberalism as still existed. Was it not stark nonsense, presumptuous nonsense that had been disposed of by destiny's *reductio ad absurdum*, that in the struggle for life it is always the stronger and the more fortunate who is the more worthy, that economic success is the reward of character and of a man's virtues? Did there really exist now any ground for believing in the harmony emerging from the conflict of interests, that mechanical and automatic process of correction? That faith in the "true and good and beautiful," that idealism of golden foam and rose leaves, which is pasted over the social system? We rejected the idea that an order of social rank could be based merely on material possessions and then represented as of moral and spiritual validity.

This brings me to a further element of our anxiety, the question of the biological soundness of our nation. In this field, as in so many others, Nazism, by crass distortion, debased to a folly a serious problem and one which is of urgent concern to all civilized nations. The idea of the biological suicide of races expresses not a fancy but a

reality. Things are not so simple as ex-politicians of the Weimar period still try to make out: it is not true that an unhealthy increase in the population in the nineteenth century is answerable for all the evils that have come upon us. I will not weary you with the arguments for and against that view. But I ask you to allow that in this field, too, we had good reasons for our opposition to the German Republic.

The problem is by no means confined to the fall in the birth rate and the statistically calculable reduction in the population figures. There was also the question of the lost balance between town and country and that of the reversed pyramid of age groups, the older groups increasing abnormally in relation to the younger groups. We had an excessive proportion, not only of urban population, but also of the older age groups. We lacked an adequate basis for renewal, both in agricultural life and in colonizing opportunities such as the younger nations of the British Commonwealth provide for the motherland. And we were no longer a people with few needs like the Slavs. Biologically we were in worse case than any other nation in Europe. The most difficult question was, from first to last, that of the family. It was under the Weimar regime that the evidence grew plain of the loosening of family ties. Here again Nazism has merely exacerbated tendencies which it found, carrying them to such deplorable extremes that now even those politicians are outraged who had ceased to interest themselves in the moral cohesion, the social "autonomy," of the family, who used to defend

the right of the children to rebellion against their parents, and who were out to destroy parental authority as the root of all servile acceptance of authoritarianism.

The family, however, is the root of all tradition. To breed the radical revolutionary, the free man liberated from all obligations, is to liberate him from the family and to dismiss all affection as silly and out of date. In the view of every sort of Left extremist the family is a horror of the Dark Ages that has to be got rid of for another reason—because it is the root of the economic passion to earn and possess. It is impossible to pursue a policy of encouragement of the family without approving of private property and the inheritance of fortunes. For the countryside, especially, a sound population policy and agrarian policy such as I have tried to define heretofore is inconceivable without respect for tradition and for the inheritance of property through a long succession of generations. For this reason we were bound to oppose tax legislation which not only placed difficulties in the way of saving but, above all, made impossible the continuance of family traditions through generation after generation. It is an exceptional thing for any consistent Left extremist to express approval of private property instead of wriggling out of the question. It is a special satisfaction to me to be able to call as a witness to the impossibility of abolishing property a person for whom the political Left Wing has great respect. Sigmund Freud declares that, from the psychological point of view, the idea of abolishing private property is based on an illusion. Abolition would involve the destruction of the biologically

indispensable institution of the family. Small-minded members of leading parties at Weimar were busy darkening counsel on this and other subjects. It cannot be said that the practical policy pursued was such as to allay the very lively apprehensions that we were bound to feel concerning demographic tendencies and the moral health of the nation.

It is no mere coincidence, and it is through no concession to Nazi ideology, that the same ideas are now coming to the fore in France after her collapse—the ideas of the family, or rootedness in the soil, and of the full quiver. But every artificial aid to these ends is useless. Bounties for nursing mothers, marriage loans, and taxation remission for large families are “springes to catch woodcocks.” The one thing that matters is the moral outlook, the ethical basis of a nation.

This brings me back to the real problem of all problems, the spiritual, ethical problem, the problem of de-Christianization. There, my dear friend, lay the fundamental reason for our strong opposition to a regime that was deliberately and systematically doing everything to promote the secularization of our life and to cut men loose from the transcendental roots of their existence. I will not dwell further on this. You have commented again and again on my tendency to indulge in ethical discussion.

I should add a few words on another matter, the question of corruption in the Weimar Republic. These men of the Weimar Republic were, compared with the Nazis, of the utmost honor and integrity. I have no hesitation in

admitting that the majority of the German politicians were absolutely honest and upright. But if we compare the character of the social life and of the political struggle of that time with earlier periods, some regrettable features are revealed. The pernicious effect of corruption lies, not in the magnitude of its gains, but in the fact of its existence. It is the subtler forms of corruption that are the most dangerous—favors for those without firm convictions, offers of high positions to the complaisant, all the subtle methods of buying men over. Since recommendations from members of parliament have become the means of securing unjustified official promotion, the German has been corrupted. He has lost all inhibitions and has fallen finally into the complete cynicism which I have so often mentioned.

In some states there is a sort of legalized corruption, an elastic conception of a figurative legality. For this the German is unfitted. No one competent to judge will propose to make the men in power in the German Republic really responsible for the orgies in Berlin in 1920-1924, with all that they involved. But, for all that, those men have their share in the moral responsibility for those excesses. Herr Hugenberg, the reactionary politician who triumphantly declared that the German labor leaders had been corrupted and the labor movement made leaderless at the moment when these men were put into dinner jackets and given champagne to drink, was not entirely mistaken, though it was no reason for triumph on his part or on that of others of his kidney. For he abandoned the honorable men who

had risen in the Social Democratic party and the trade unions, and went over to Hitler's *déclassés*.

There were other methods, too, that caused us deep anxiety, though they were trifles compared with those of the present day. In that democratic Germany, freedom and justice were guaranteed. There were none of the acts of violence which the modern absolutism committs. But there were more delicate forms of compulsion. There were very formidable material means of corrupting character. The procession of the subservient competitors in the field of characterlessness through the gates of promotion to good posts began in the time of the Weimar Republic.

It is the first steps in such developments that produce the actual change. Only at the outset can they be still resisted. The failure to resist them soon enough and firmly enough is one element in the responsibility for what has happened.

One thing more must be mentioned. That is the power of snobbery, which played a greater part in the general disintegration than people care to admit. I do not want to make a great deal of the snobbish way in which in certain circles Communist ideas were flaunted like a particularly striking necktie. Youth is entitled to its passing phase of a radical breach with tradition and convention. But that process has a liberating and formative influence only if the subversive tendencies are overcome. Otherwise the same thing happens which you so often observed in Germany—the production of the incurable juvenile, the elderly "*Wandervogel*," the type that never outgrows the follies of youth, even when tottering into old age.

Where this pseudo youthfulness is worn as a distinctive mark, it not only becomes absurd and ridiculous but destroys the balance between the generations. A confusion of mind results which is not to be taken lightly. The competition begins between the old and the young generation for supremacy in juvenility.

Why is libertinism more manly than self-restraint? Why is it more *chic* to take the *cocotte* as the standard of fashion and morals than the bright and independent type of woman who combines simplicity and charm with naturalness? Snobbishness is the itch to create an impression in some way that others cannot imitate. But is there anything easier to imitate than nihilism? Has not the fashionable cynicism become so hackneyed that the snob might well return for a change to a patriarchal sternness of outlook?

My picture is scanty. I know it. But I particularly did not want to give you a journalistic sketch with the "facts" that mean so much to you. I wanted to show you the inter-linking of the problems—why a conservative not only felt bound to resist certain political currents in German affairs but was compelled to combat this whole process of fundamentally unsound political improvisation. He could never hope to secure even a modicum of attention for his own anxieties on behalf of the community as a whole.

I have written at too great length already. Only a word more now on a thing of which we conservatively minded people stood in horror—the union of dogmatism with false generalizations. Usually people never stop to consider how many of their political judgments are generalizations that

have no counterpart in realities. Take, for instance, the modern expression I have myself used: "modern industrial society"! Well and good—it exists. But where, and on what scale? What about the great blocs of a totally different society, blocs which virtually have still the organic character of the Middle Ages? All these generalizations are at all times of only limited validity. What, for instance, is the meaning of the Renaissance man, or the man of the ancient world? We try to detach types and make a one-sided selection of the real processes. On this defective foundation a further generalized construction is built up. Thinking in abstractions, in the best solutions that can be brought into harmony with a line of thought, is one of the most pernicious of mistakes. It is the usual mistake of all German parties, not only of Nazism. The second great temptation is that of constructing purely rational systems on the basis of some particular doctrine instead of recognizing the force of the elements and developments that trace the broad lines of actual history by means of unique events.

If you have followed me thus far in this all-too-long epistle, you will not entirely fail to understand what I now say, without any intention of making any charge or denouncing anyone: In all the tendencies in the Weimar Republic which we combated, it was a *prelude* to the final phase, the Nazi phase, of our German Revolution. These tendencies Nazism took over and stamped into the form of radical Jacobinism.

WHAT WE EXPECTED FROM NATIONAL SOCIALISM

I WAS DESPERATE about my inability to make myself intelligible to you. My impatience must have wounded you. I have been across the fields today: I am living in a region in which, as you know, the cultivation is at a very high level. I am surprised to find in some quarters here a poor opinion of your agriculture. It may certainly be no longer as far ahead of any other as a century or a century and a half ago. But I think it has preserved all the elasticity required for meeting the very varied natural conditions and the particularly difficult economic situation.

But that is not what I wanted to write to you about. I watched the plowing today. I asked whether there would be barley coming up next year. "No," said the laborer, "turnips." "Turnips?" I said—was not that too shallow a furrow for turnips, though our soil is good deep loam, with plenty of humus. "If I plow that deep," said the laborer, "I bring up the dead soil." He used terms that I did not quite catch, but that was the gist of what he said.

As I went on, my thoughts returned to the subject of our talk. Perhaps there could have been no better start for

them. I wrote to you once about the danger of impoverishing the humus of our soil. But it is also possible to plow up the sterile soil and to destroy the productivity of a field by unskilled working.

It is the same with the mold as with the people. Only a quite definite zone in it is cultivable and fertile. Similarly, in the people there are sterile strata, sterile in history and for the creative culture of the nation. The zone that bears the actual historic life of a people may disappear, may lose its fertility, becoming sterile like the rest of the soil. But it may also be destroyed by an act of violence; it may be plowed under.

This, in revolutionary times, is the greater danger. This sort of thing has happened to not a few peoples through the destruction wrought by war or revolutionary upheavals. Long ages must then pass before fertility returns. But when the fertility fades away of its own accord, the people sink to the state of the unhistoried.

I have no great opinion of the ideas Oswald Spengler puts forward in his *Decline of the West*. But in one thing he is certainly right, in the ending of outlived civilizations in the unhistoried state, the state of "fellaheen." Something of this sort happens when a nation no longer has a replenishing, history-making stratum, when the standard type of a nation, the type of the man of the masses, is of the poorest sort, yielding for its continuance nothing better than the featureless, unthinking, young-old man who is interested only in sport and pottering, the cinema, the weak end, his lady friend, and the comforts of life.

Do you not think that the French nation is very near to a fate of this sort? It is being subjected to the temptation to throw off the burden of its great history. It is tempted to content itself with the modest joys of the salaried lower middle class. Perhaps it no longer possesses a genuinely outstanding class that can carry on the great traditions of that history. I say only "perhaps": it may be that the present is only a time of resting and recuperating.

I do not know whether I have not once more expressed myself too much in terms of mere literature. In Berlin ten years ago, a horrible term was coined, the "*geschichtsfuge Oberschicht*," the "upper class authorized to make history," and the critical question was asked: "Where is it? Are we descending to the state of the *fellaheen*, the un-historied? Is not the Weimar regime the beginning of this descent? A regime that does not lead the masses but gives way to their characteristic tendencies. Tendencies fed always by weariness of civilization, of the burden of history, of the obligations of the spirit. Do you remember the despairing words of the great Spanish writer, Unamuno, spoken shortly before his death in the midst of that terrible civil war?"¹

¹ The New York Times, January 3, 1937, (By the Associated Press) Lisbon, Portugal, Jan. 2.—Miguel de Unamuno, noted Spanish philosopher and writer who died suddenly at Salamanca on New Year's Eve, told the *Diario De Noticias* shortly before his death that "*the sight of Germans in Spain is enough to kill me*," the newspaper said today.

"*They act on Spanish soil as if it was their own*," the *Diario De Noticias* quoted the seventy-two-year-old philosopher as saying, as he watched a marching group of German volunteers from his Salamanca balcony.

Suddenly the people no longer exist. Men still talk the familiar language. There still remain a few familiar features. But these masses are merely dressing up in the historic paraphernalia of the past, like the man of the lower middle class who loves to go to a fancy dress ball as a grandee, a Don Juan. Is not that the destiny with which this latter-day Europe is faced, the disappearance of the great creative elements? The feeling of having come to the end of all things was one of the worst troubles we endured after that lost war.

I have strayed some way from my subject, and must pick up my thread and try to explain what we expected from Nazism. "*Was wir Nationalsozialismus erwarteten*," "What We Expected from National Socialism." This was the title of a little pamphlet that appeared in 1932. In it several authors collaborated, raising a number of questions. They included a Protestant and a Catholic clergyman, politicians and constitutional lawyers, university professors and schoolmasters. Each of them expressed from his own point of view the gravest doubts of Nazism, and their questions probed the weak spots in Nazi doctrine and practice. And all of them agreed that Nazism had it entirely in its power to meet these questions either in a generous and creative

In the interview, Mr. de Unamuno said he had supported the Insurgents in Spain at the beginning but added:

"I soon realized this struggle, inspired at first by high motives, had rapidly developed into a class war, full of horrors, without pity or generosity of any kind."

"No less regrettably to be mentioned is the decrease in the mental capacity of the youth of Spain and their increasing disregard for human intelligence in favor of a love of violence and brutality."

spirit or in such a way that it would bring the German people to ruin.

I will not deal in detail with this pamphlet, which would still repay reading and would give you a clear insight into our ideas at that time and into the fact that we did not plunge blindly into the "adventure" amid a mass of illusions. The writer of the introductory article, Professor Mannhardt, of the University of Marburg, was a friend of mine at the time. It happened that in the fateful summer of 1932 he took a team of students, mostly Germans living abroad, on a "study tour" eastward, coming to Danzig among other places. I was then president of our farmers' association, and I invited the young men to visit our principal agricultural estates. In conversation we came to the subject of that article. In that disturbed year, conversation with no political background was quite impossible.

The article and our conversation touched on five main points: Without a stratum among the people that carries its historical, intellectual, and political creative elements, without a stratum of true leaders, the greatest people sinks to the level of slumbering vegetation. Such a stratum is not to be confused with any social upper class, of whatever origin, based on blue blood or possessions. Germany has no such stratum at present, and it can come into existence only in a new process. The self-styled "*geschichtsbefugte Oberschicht*" of the Weimar regime is the antithesis of such a stratum. It is a clique for mutual boosting, an expression of the universal mediocrity. The German people is in a state of revolutionary upheaval. It is on the march. It has broken

away from its past ideas and is in search of a new spiritual home. (General Smuts said the same thing a few years later, in a wonderfully vivid way, of all civilized humanity.) This movement is genuine and creative. It may enable our nation to take the lead in a great ascent of the peoples of the West. But this movement is elemental, an unbridled natural force. It needs to be given shape, to be disciplined, to be provided with political leadership. In order to be active and effective in the political world, it needs a political organ. That cannot develop automatically. It requires time and opportunity. It needs association with an existing political force. The force which is nearest to it, and which, consciously or not, has taken over much of it, is the National Socialist party. The great opportunity for the future is the fusing of the two. From this the great popular movement will gain political form and creative strength; the Nazi party will gain a genuine content. There is a great danger that Nazism may take advantage of the impulses of the popular movement, misusing it and making capital out of it. It might be that the party would remain what it is, the political movement of a stratum of asocial and declassed elements. The Nazi party shows signs of serious inadequacy. It may fall to pieces. It is even probable that it will fall to pieces. How are we to prevent its collapse from carrying with it into the abyss the great popular movement of renewal, and so leaving Germany in an even worse state than at present? How are we to prevent the great expenditure of energy from futility? The only way is to get rid of the Nazi leaders and replace them by a

body of young men of experience, intelligence, and initiative, who will not seek their own advantage like the Nazi "elite" but the fulfillment of the tasks that face them.

One thing, we concluded, was necessary—to put to use the unquestioned stirring in our nation. Only with the aid of this could that venture into the unknown be attempted which opens every great epoch of history. The ordinary leaders, the "elderly statesmen," could be of no service at such times; but neither could the desperadoes help. The struggle must be entered on against the personal leadership of the Nazis, by producing from within the Nazi movement the only opposition that could be expected to be effective. The young had to be gained. The young could be won over only by the extremist parties and were to be had only for truly creative work.

We were attracted by an element that existed in Nazism and in no other German party. When one is compelled to venture into unfamiliar regions beyond the boundaries of ordinary routine, and to ignore the pretensions of the experts—and this happens at all times of great crises and changes—then the success of a great experiment depends above all on an immense faith and a vitality of far more than the normal temperature. Where did such a faith exist in Germany? Where had it been until recently in all the democratic countries? Was it not hesitation, skepticism, resignation, at best half-faith, that had been the true causes of the world's great disaster—the second thoughts that dim the bright colors of a resolve, the discretion that always makes action too late, the self-pity of those who groan at

being required to restore to normality a world out of joint instead of devoting themselves to the enjoyment of life? This half-heartedness, this incomplete faith in the cause, this relief at finding reasons for doing nothing and dismissing the subject—all this existed over against a movement whose boundless faith seemed grotesque and infantile amid the skeptical environment of the time.

Does not men's unshakable faith in themselves and their mission always seem puerile and grotesque to the resigned skeptic? To those who had any feeling at all that the new and unfamiliar could be achieved only by strong faith, it was clear in the Germany of 1930-1933 that there was nothing to be hoped for from the "elderly statesmen." These men saw no necessity for any departure from the customary; they scarcely saw anything beyond the problems of the moment; they were completely immersed in detail.

In historic crises the saving act comes always from the outsiders, the men who are regarded as fools. In this Nazism there was faith, a truly ungovernable and unmanly faith in itself. That was the attractive element in it. That was the secret of its sex appeal, not only to the masses, but to the intellectuals, although the latter saw plainly the alarming and menacing elements in the movement. It was not only by tricks and publicity dodges that the Nazi movement won over the masses but by this same unbreakable will and faith. Problems are mastered, not by superior intelligence and knowledge, but by the will that nothing can discourage.

There is no arguing with those people who to this day are convinced that all might have been different if only Nazism had been forcibly suppressed in time, that instead of a sanguinary war there would then have come world-wide economic and political harmony. No one is more convinced than I am that this catastrophe might have been prevented. I have no belief in any inexorable historic destiny. But great world crises cannot be overcome by petty means. Evolution in place of revolution would only have been conceivable if the men at the head ten to fifteen years ago had not merely kept watch for silver streaks on the horizon, for signs of the abatement of the crisis, and made this waiting their excuse for once more putting off the necessary but troublesome remedies, but had recognized the full dimensions of the change in our world and had been efficient helpers in the introduction of the new age.

But would this not have been asking too much? Were not these great men, personally great and clear-sighted as they may have been, petty and dependent as exponents of forces which they did not control but left to control them? Thus the whole development was inevitable. Any renewal was difficult to conceive without a decisive revolutionary move. Three things this man Hitler had, with his Nazism, that gave him the advantage over all other forces—the conviction that he stood at a critical turning point in history; a sovereign contempt for all accepted forms, all limits of the conventional, and all orthodox views; and the unshakable belief in his own mission.

Perhaps it is only possible for a man to attain Hitler's

contempt for all that is conventional and usual and traditional if he has had such a life as Hitler's. But why was there not the same realization of the vast scope of the changes in our time in other quarters? Why was there not elsewhere that faith in a mission to help a new order into being?

The only thing that could have been effectively set against this Nazism was a great faith. Instead of that, the mark of the times was pusillanimity or baseless optimism.

To return to our talk in that early summer of 1932—what was it that we expected from Nazism? Nothing less than that it should make itself the instrument of the renewal of the German people by means of the values of Western civilization and German tradition. That it should serve this renewal, not make use of it for its own ends. Faith was what we expected from the masses led by it and readiness for sacrifice and discipline, without which the exceptional problems of the future were insoluble. It gave us the opportunity of forming a new political and intellectual elite, a body of leaders who would throw down the frontier posts of the past party formations. This could only be done if we ourselves, if conservative elements, entered the political movement in order to permeate it. "Into the Nazi movement" was not only the summons with which we parted from one another. It was also the advice of the former Minister Treviranus to the "Popular Conservatives," who had revolted like us from the reactionary activities of the unteachable Hugenberg. It was the only possible means of guiding the movement from within and gaining influ-

ence over it. Thus it had nothing of the Machiavellianism now charged against our endeavor after our failure. It was the obvious and the only thing to do. It may have been a mistake, but it was no guilty partnership in Hitler's machinations. Only the ideas of the need for inducing the masses to turn away from politics, and thus duping them, were mistaken and misleading.

How does a new elite come into existence? A body of leaders representing the historic continuity of the nation, when the old elite has been plowed under or has lost its energy? That is a question, my friend, which affects you, too, more than may willingly be admitted in public. It is the chief of all the questions that face every civilized nation today.

I do not want to burden you with Pareto and his theory of the rotation of elites. But this much I am bound to say: elites cannot be created, cannot be built up or, in spite of all our rational planners, "planned." If they no longer exist, if the natural process of their recruitment has broken down and an entirely new elite becomes necessary, it will install itself only in the course of a definite and positive historic process. It will take upon itself the responsibility for the fate of nation and state and society. It will identify itself with that fate, and in so doing it will make history.

Nazism, in its primitive but effective way, gave us, with its elite, a demonstration of how this is done. Our task was to prevent its party elite from becoming the only elite in Germany. No hierarchy of officials can take the place of a selected group of independent men. The nobility, the in-

tellectuals, the big capitalists, the officials, the clubs, the industrial unions, corporations, religious fraternities—all had been tried. What method of selection of men remained? Nothing but the primitive process of personal rivalry.

Shall I give you a catalogue of all the things we wanted to achieve with the aid of Nazism? Tradition instead of radicalism, continuity instead of a rationally worked-out fresh start. Evolution instead of revolution. A form resulting from growth instead of a manufactured apparatus. Self-government instead of bureaucratism. Decentralization instead of centralization. Variety instead of uniformity. Personal initiative instead of tutelage. The individual instead of the collective. Property instead of independence on incomes drawn from the state. A Christian basis instead of that of the “enlightenment” of rationalism.

As I write these few words to you, I realize how little they convey and how easily all such generalizations may be misunderstood. It is so easy to reel them off. But was self-government, for instance, possible in these times? Was it not, in consequence of its expenditure of time and energy, a “hindrance to traffic”? Were they not all hindrances to business, these conservative ideas of ours of variety and individuality? Hindrances to business that stood in the way of a rational process and a common-sense order?

We were well aware of the existence of some of these deeper questions. There were other things we demanded that were of doubtful value, a fact of which we were understandably and pardonably unaware. There were many

questions of detail which today have become by no means insignificant, and which some day will become important. Our aim was the setting up of units capable of supervision. Only so did there seem still to be any chance of saving democracy. In intellectual matters we tried, long before Nazism, to make use of the conceptions of home training and family culture, to return in education to the concrete and the things that may be comprehended through the senses. Not merely in the Pestalozzian sense, because it is picturesque, but for the sake of the preservation and further development of the variety, the wealth of distinctions, within Germany. What Professor Mannhardt called at that time the "popular German movement," a conception that has today been worn entirely threadbare and robbed of its value, described a movement for the bringing together of every German element, and it was no mere chance that these ideas arose outside Germany, among the Germans beyond the frontier and overseas, Germans who were suffering from the centralizing tendencies of the national democratic Succession States.

Thus our ideas were not concerned with what is called the state but with the renewal of the conception of the Reich, a "Third Reich," in any case, a special order which had nothing in common with the ideas of the French *Etat*. It never occurred to us that Nazism would usurp these ideas in order to misapply them to the single purpose of maintaining its power. In its activities we saw a tangled mass of conflicting tendencies which we might be able to unravel. In its program it placed the idea of the Reich in

the foreground of its objectives. It promised to restore self-government. It had ideas of a new federative reconstruction of Germany. Even when the institution of the *Reichsstatthalter*, or governors of provinces, was introduced, it was still possible to regard this as a really brilliant idea of personal union of a federation of independent members. Was it not a fruitful idea to try to secure the union, not by bureaucratic means and in a written constitution, but through the personal influence of trusted men, of a sort of "high commissioners"?

There was also the phenomenon of the masses. How was it to be got rid of as a political force and a menace to any political order? We hoped for help from Nazism in this. We proceeded from the reflection that the masses can only be overcome through themselves. They must be made non-political by a mass movement and then set limits to themselves, or, rather, give themselves a new form, in which they are no longer masses but an articulated, ordered community with a public function, though a restricted one.

I do not know to this day how far we were right in these ideas and how far our reflections were of doctrinaire origin. But this much I do know today; that for the sake of this argument we came to terms, and felt that we were bound to come to terms, with a side of Nazism of whose radically destructive nature we had at that time no conception, that of demagogery, propaganda, political intoxication, and hysteria. In accepting these things because we believed that there was no other way of gaining political power or of disciplining the masses, we were in error. I

will not attempt to palliate or belittle the error by pointing out that other parties and political movements also made use of these expedients—less effectively, it is true, because with less cunning.

It had not occurred to us for a moment that in accepting demagogic methods we delivered ourselves up to a process that would “take charge” and compel us to resort to measures of exactly the opposite sort to those which we intended to take. The modern mass-democracy is faced with the question whether to make use of this new technique of mass psychology in political controversy or to abstain from it. There will be practical politicians everywhere who, undisturbed by the question of the immorality of these means, will attend only to that of their efficacy and utility. To all those who are trying to copy the Nazi or Fascist tricks I can only say that mass propaganda is not only immoral but inexpedient, because, while it may help to overcome momentary difficulties, it brings to life no real and lasting forces.

In all this I have said nothing on one point which you will want answered as the most essential of all: the question how it was possible for us to associate ourselves with the Nazi playing at soldiers, the militant organizations and the intention of thorough-going rearmament. I will add only the following to what I wrote to you not long ago—that that which I described as a rebirth out of the element of the army is perhaps being made clearer by the latest developments. I mean simply that it is not enough to have a constitution in order to be certain of a state in the

leadership of the nation. I mean that a state is always in the first place an organization for practical activity. At times of failing energies the state must fall back on the element in which such an organization pre-eminently exists. This, usually, is the army; or, if there is none, the nucleus of an army in the unions of men trained in defense. The state becomes what it is in the creative times of its birth—the active association of all conscious elements of will and vitality. It is exactly that that we wanted during the crisis of the Weimar Republic in the renewal of our people's army. So, at least, we saw it.

THE CRISIS OF LIBERAL ECONOMY

YOU ARE CERTAINLY justified in charging us with inconsistencies, vaguenesses, mistaken judgments, and errors. I do not deny them. Nor do I claim that what I wrote to you about the Weimar regime should be taken as an impartial judgment. I have tried to make clear to you what were the motives of our opposition ten years ago. It could only be the one-sided judgment of a party. It does not represent a critical historic assessment.

But in admitting this I claim a similar estimation of the political judgments of our opponents, that same Weimar regime. That, too, was simply a party. I am driven to make this claim by your contention that our economic ideas and activities were totally mistaken. In summing up my own practical efforts as senator for economic affairs in Danzig, and my theoretical remarks, you accuse me after all of being nothing but a supporter of corporativism and of controlled industry. You think the ideas I had gained of national economy autarchy still remain with me, consciously or not. Today, as ten years ago, I am an opponent of liberal economy, a believer in the paradise of a crisis-proof economic system, a believer in the efficacy of state interven-

tion, of artificial provision of employment, and of currency experimenting. You contend further that I imagined and still imagine that a new economic order can be created by a simple trick of organization. You laugh at that "egg of Columbus," that device of a corporative order, by means of which we proposed to start a new economic system and at the same time to get rid of the class war.

It is, of course, absurd to think of decreeing away the class war or to imagine that it can be got rid of by a trick of organization. Neither an institution like the Nazi "Labor Front" nor a system of occupational chambers can do that. The class war is a concrete historical element that has had a substantial share in determining the destinies of all nations in the last century and a half. Such an element is not to be bluffed out of existence. The struggle only continues underground and grows more extreme.

We have never harbored the illusion that so simple a remedy as a new scheme of organization can end an age-long movement. There may have been reactionaries in Germany who believed in the magic effects of organization. But there certainly were doctrinaires who imagined that they could organize the world economic depression out of existence. To that extent your remarks are justified. But does that mean that our criticism, too, was wrong on the point that still seems to me to be the essential one: that the freedom of the markets was gone and the exchange of goods in the world no longer worked effectively, and that the main reason for the crisis was not by any means to be sought merely in economic conditions, whether stagnant

markets or overproduction or any mechanical disturbance, but in the progressive disintegration of society, the gravest symptom of which was the class war?

The liberal economic system is not, as is popularly supposed, the natural order of things. On the contrary, it is the highest, most sublime, most effectual form of economic activity that the human spirit has developed. But its working depends on certain definite conditions. It presupposes a firm basis of agreements, and it demands a social system that is in equilibrium. The freedom of the markets has certainly been gradually disappearing for decades through two tendencies to which it has itself given birth—monopolies and interventionism. And certainly the “weak state”—the state that is no longer strong enough to keep particular interests within bounds in the general interest and fails to develop its legislative framework so as to prevent the misuse of economic power—must share the blame for the morbid excrescences on the economic system. For that reason, at times of economic crisis like ours of ten years ago, men call for a strong state.

But in world trade there can be no falling back on an “arbiter” state. World trade reveals most clearly of all the actual nature of the liberal economic system, the elements on which it rests. It does not rest on legislation, on the fiat of a controlling state: it depends on the existence of a system of agreements, on an ethical basis. It demands security, continuity, fixed standards and accepted rules.

But that is just what had been lost, and it was precisely that loss that was one of the chief reasons for the decay of

world trade. When, however, things have come to that pass and the world exchange of goods no longer functions, the idea automatically arises of "national" economic systems, of economic "spaces" that can be dominated and compulsorily "ordered." Then, even without military reasons, without the ideas of "defense economics" (*Wehrwirtschaft*) and "total mobilization," one comes to the "autarchic" economic system. The determination is felt to assure at least the home market to the home industries, and, in place of agreements that no longer work, a legislative framework may be created for trade and industry. But this is possible only with the territory in which one's own writ runs, that is to say, within the territory of one's own state.

Our ideas move in a circle. Ten years ago, the attempt was made to replace the lost basis of the liberal economic system by a controlling mechanism which was borrowed from mercantilism. Today, instead of this, a new mechanism is being planned. It is called "political and economic planning," and, in place of one system, a "national economic system" is introduced and, of another, a "social economic system." The autarchic state gives place to the state of "social services."

It is not idle to recall these old errors. In slightly changed guise these past errors are the errors of the coming time. Can a legislative framework suffice to restore to the economic system the elements of initiative and control which it has lost? Is not what is really needed the regeneration of the ethical basis?

That was our actual purpose in advocating strong self-governing bodies in economic life. Their task was by no means to be confined to the regulation of trade and production. It was to be largely one of self-education and of the reawakening of the sense of individual responsibility for the welfare of the community.

My political friends have always been with me in recognizing that the freedom of the markets is, beyond all question, the most effective and fruitful of economic systems. It is as essential to our Western civilization as democracy. The two are inseparable. There can be no democratic political order without a free economic system. Democracy with economic planning is as unthinkable as free trade under a totalitarian regime. Democracy and the liberal economic order both depend on a working system of agreements and an organic structure of society. It is thus no mere chance that the crisis in the liberal economic system is at the same time a crisis in democracy, or vice versa. Both today lack two essentials, agreements and an organic and balanced society. Not only democracy but the economic system is unable to work when society is falling to pieces.

I wrote earlier of one of our three great problems as the production of a crisis-proof economic system. I will express it in more modest terms. Is not complete immunity from crises to be obtained only from a system of total economic planning, and is not that too high a price to pay—the exchange of freedom for security? The thing, however, that it was desired to attain, and that it might be practicable

to attain, is a greater degree of economic shock-absorption, a form of economic organization which would enable trade fluctuations to be more easily borne with the aid of individual economic reserves. Neither by means of currency dodges nor by public works nor by artificial increase of purchasing power was any lasting economic recovery to be achieved, but by the de-proletarianization of the masses.

You have reproached me with the way serious politicians permitted themselves to follow the wild economic ideas of the Nazi economic experts. I have no desire to say a word in defense of those men, Gottfried Feder and Lawaczek. But there is one thing I must point out. The essence of the Nazi economic ideas was originally sound—the decentralization of industry, the moving of industries into the country districts, the breaking up of the giant works, the promotion of works on a smaller scale, the building of workers' housing estates, co-partnership, and the rooting of the workers in the rural environment by means of allotments, the breeding of poultry and the like. There can be no question that a sound social structure is only to be gained for the modern masses on these lines, and this is the most important of current social and economic problems. It was not Nazism that taught us this fact, but, since it saw the importance of these problems and promised to solve them, we felt justified in overlooking other Nazi economic ideas that were absurdities. A widespread rooting of all classes in the soil, with their own homes and property, the strengthening of the lower middle class, the encouragement

of small industries and handicrafts—all this was not a romantic return to the times of Hans Sachs but the only means of counteracting the mortal danger to society represented by the phenomenon of the modern industrial masses.

This was the exact opposite of what the social theorists of Marxism desired and expected. But from this side also we were bound to become opponents of Marxism, with its ideas of the concentration of the means of production, the proletarianization of the masses, and the impoverishment of the peasantry as the necessary conditions for the abolition of capitalism. I come back once more to the problem of the masses as the most vital of all our questions.

People are inclined always to look at things primarily from the economic point of view, and easily overlook the fact that it was spiritual changes that accounted for the unrest among the masses. It is the divorce from life that is the central element in this unrest. Consider the existence of the industrial workers. Crowded together in the workshops, confined to monotonous mechanical actions, and shut out from the creative impulses of individual activity, excluded in their barracklike tenements from natural associations and the rhythm of life close to nature, the workers feel that they are delivered into the power of impersonal forces and find neither hope nor meaning in life. Their amusements are merely mechanical and a pointless frittering away of their leisure. Insecurity, purposelessness, emptiness are the characteristics of a life lived always in the shadow of want. It is not the wages question that matters so much

as the removal of insecurity and the attainment of firm and enduring associations.

Petty reforms could be of no service here, only a reform of wide scope and lasting effect. But who had the strength to carry it through?

THE ALIEN CORN

IT IS DIFFICULT for me to answer your question because I do not want to hurt men who personally deserve high esteem and who have become involved in a tragic destiny. Nevertheless, I must say what it is that divides us.

Here we have, for instance, the author of a recently published book on the end of Prussia, a man who regards himself as belonging to the liberal Germany. He draws frontier lines and invents a history that exists only in his brain. He does not see how such doctrinaire efforts furnish a posthumous justification for our opposition to Weimar. He does not see how unhistoric, how abstract, how destructive is his whole enterprise. Here, again, are the remains of the Social Democratic party, to this day, after this avalanche of events, with no better advice to offer to their followers than to eschew any sort of coalition with capitalists.

I am well aware of the difference between doctrinaire Marxism and the practical policy of reform into which a number of leading Social Democrats have tried to divert the extremism of the masses. There was no alliance in Germany

between Social Democracy and communism. But was not the temptation to such a popular front policy always present? Did not a section of the Social Democratic *émigrés*, even after their plunge into exile, try to copy that phase of French politics which contributed so greatly to the destruction of France's moral power of resistance?

Is that the vision of a new Germany in a new Europe? Can you deny that Marxism, with its doctrinaire jargon of a radical revolution, produced the irreparable breach in our people? Bismarck certainly did much to widen that breach. But the fact remains that that great socialistic Labor party in Germany did not preach reforms but the negation of the existing state, the existing society, the existing economic order, and the existing Christian civilization—and, above all, it preached the dictatorship of a class. Please do not overlook the fact that the modern dictatorship has its origin in doctrinaire socialism, not in the nationalist camp. But among all the evils of nihilism, dictatorship is not the only one that has its roots in Marxism. Remember that systematic coupling of anti-Christianity with class consciousness, that organized colportage of materialism, and the gospel of unbridled indulgence of the senses. Where were the roots of modern barbarism if not among these destroyers of human morality and order, these doctrinaires of a revolutionary socialism that is out to destroy the continuity of historic existence and replace it by an artificial, rationalist, utopian new order?

Is it likely that a permanent peace will come out of that environment? We do not want a doctrinaire peace

but an empirical, a realistic peace. Here there are no possibilities of compromise. The moral I draw from the errors of that appalling experiment is that democracy and revolutionism are mutually irreconcilable. Not those men, men perpetually playing with the fire of revolution, are the guardians of democracy. It is not by a mere chance that several prominent Socialists and so many of their followers went over so quickly to the side of totalitarian absolutism. And not only in Germany: I may recall the case of the Belgian, de Man, and of French Socialists.

Socialism has to come. I hope you will not misunderstand my rejection of doctrinaire Marxism and of the parties that have represented it politically. In a democratic order in Germany a socialistic Labor party will be indispensable. There is no question of any rejection of the socialistic trends of our policy or of the general trend of social renewal. It was the recognition of the necessity of a synthesis of these socialistic trends with the elements of tradition that made us opponents of the political reaction that centered on Hugenberg. This recognition remains as necessary as ever. It makes it impossible for me to work with men whose only desire is to begin again with an improved edition of the methods initiated eight years ago by our present adversaries.

It is not merely a naïve but a dangerous illusion that the Weimar Republic and its parties can simply be reinstated. But it is a still more dangerous enterprise to envisage the emergence out of the chaos of this new world war of a Red Greater Germany, or to pursue the ideas of partition,

flying in the face of all history and all economics, put forward by that writer who has advocated the end of Prussia as the one thing needed for the coming peace.

I am bound to blame a good many of these men for placing above our common aim of getting rid of this regime of insanity in Germany their own doctrinaire, particularist aims and political pet theories, with which they are as obsessed as only a German or a Russian can be. A year ago I published my *Voice of Destruction*.¹ It gave a rather different picture of Hitler from those already existing. He has not been merely a cork floating on the surface. In him the subversive tendencies of a whole age were focused. The origin of many of his ideas and methods in revolutionary Marxism was unmistakable. The book was no sooner published than a storm of suspicion broke out against it and against its author, which did much, particularly in America, to diminish the effect of the book in enlightening opinion. The writer was charged with falsification, plagiarism, and even Hitlerist propaganda. Hitler, it was said, was placed on too high a pedestal; he was made to appear a great man. Efforts were made to kill the book by casting suspicion on the writer's political past. Why? Did I make any other claim than to be giving a timely warning? Were my forecasts wrong? Have they not been proved right in many points?

There was a deeper reason. The book was inconvenient because it upset the general assessment of Nazism as a merely nationalist movement and showed that its real roots

¹ G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1940.

lay in Marxism. Personal suspicions may leave one unmoved. But was it not simply playing Hitler's game to pooh-pooh timely warnings because the author's political past was not of the desired color and because the truth was awkward? Was it not playing Hitler's game to try to bury the truth because it would compel a revision of existing ideas and make it impossible to shift the whole responsibility for what had happened on to other shoulders than the critic's own?

When one has made the clean break with the past that is involved in the plunge into exile, one needs a sense of self-respect and a power of judgment of right and wrong that are not to be influenced by the approval or disapproval of outsiders. I might have kept silence and left the record of Hitler's conversation unpublished; would that have benefited anyone but myself? I should have thought that the German *émigrés* and the Socialist Left wing of the Western democracies would be glad that I did not shirk the odium of being placed in an ambiguous light but took the risk, in order to reveal a daemonic spirit of whose diabolical efficacy none of them had had any conception a year ago.

How much do we *émigrés* count in this great struggle? How much can we still count? Could we summon a national council of representatives of all the former German parties, a rival government serving to show the Nazi regime in the Reich that a new center exists? One thing the German people will certainly not want—the return of the Weimar parties. It is intelligible that the recognition of this should

be hard for the former leaders of that regime, men personally deserving of honor, men pre-eminently of good will. Like the old John Gabriel Bjorkman, they have been waiting for the summons to return to their great uncompleted work. But they will no more receive that summons than John Gabriel did.

A large section of the German *émigrés* had failed to realize the deep and irrevocable changes that have come over the German people in the course of the last ten years. Those who have not had personal experience of the complete destruction of all the elements of the old order and of the pressure of the ubiquitous machinery of domination speak of Germany as the blind may speak of color. Between us who live in exile and the German people now living under Nazism there scarcely remains any common measure of judgment and feeling. The longer this situation continues, the more we and they will grow apart. We are no longer able even to speak the language of this new Germany. We are separated from the new Germany by a whole layer of experience. How could we lead this people?

Our task in exile is to find a new synthesis and to get away from our own doctrines, not to hold fast to them in mutual hatred and bitterness as the only possessions we still have, pluming ourselves as we do so on our strength of character. It should be our task to abandon the controversial fury that poisoned our political life in Germany, for the sake of unity amid the deep humiliations of exile, and to seek the things that unite us instead of those that divide us. If we men of the Right abandon the claim to ex-

clusiveness for our ideas, is it not reasonable that the men of the Left should also abandon their class standpoint and give up the claim to dictatorship which they have advanced for nearly a hundred years? Is not the one a condition of the other? If we cannot even do this in our small circle in exile, how can we expect to have any mission of leadership in a new Germany?

But there is another thing that excludes us from future leadership. We have been placed by the war in the position of Coriolanus, and this is becoming an almost inseparable obstacle to any claim to be German leaders. The longer the conflict lasts, the more our salvation must be sought in a moral and political position *between* the nations. From that position we may well be able to fulfill a valuable function, that of mediation and conciliation.

We have become the “alien corn.”

When we talk of *émigrés*, we sum up all sorts of destinies in a single term. There are the men who have withdrawn from political activity and have sought other occupations, study or profession. There are those who belonged to the intellectual elite of their nation but who have grown into a new environment of duties and who more and more lose touch with German problems. But the great mass consists of that other, that alien corn: a quiet, obscure collection of men who have been uprooted from all past associations, escaping with their bare lives, and are standing now face to face with strangers with whom they come to terms only with difficulty. A great company who are slowly sinking, with but the one question: why must we suffer?

Sinking to proletarians, in more hopeless case every week! The great misery of these people, who had no interest in politics and were compelled to flee abroad against their will, and who now have to take up a political position—it is something different from anything that *émigrés* have had to endure in the past. In the past, *émigrés* have always stood for some idea, some mission, some future aim. These, however, have only their daily pang of memory and fear of yet worse to come.

Unlike all *émigrés* of the past, we are not the seed for a new summer but the surplus from a summer that is past, with the many hues of autumn but not the vital energy of youth. We are backward-looking in a greater degree than we are willing to admit.

I have no desire at all to blame anyone for the things that are inseparable from our uprooted existence. We cannot move outside the limits of our destiny, but we can at least recognize them and respect them. Up to now the German *émigrés* have not been the advance guard of a coming time but the petrified remains of the past.

The course of history depends, however, not only on the active, but on the passive element, those who have withdrawn into the realms of meditation and contemplation. "*Zu dulden ist, sei's tätig oder leidend auch,*" says Goethe in *Epimetheus*: we have to endure, whether in action or suffering. But we may also say, "We must count, whether actively or in endurance." There lies our task—clarification, comprehension, and strength to resist and reject evil and destruction. In our situation it is easy to despair and to lose.

all hope. Powerless as we are to take any action, we are liable to feel that we no longer count for anything. But our very existence, our maintenance of vitality against violence, gives us a power that may move mountains.

You ask me another question, and one which I must not omit to answer. You ask when I realized the error of anti-Semitism. My practical policy can have given you no reason for supposing that I am or ever was an anti-Semite.

The Jew is by nature strong in dialectics, critically minded. His clearness and boldness of judgment, his cool and logical thinking, are an indispensable complement of the German nature. I am not in any way hostile to that critical-mindedness, with its insistence on straight thinking and factual judgment. In every environment the Jew with his shrewdness is the "salt of life." But the Jew is also conservatively minded, a man of the law, an upholder of the family, of tradition, of implicit obedience to the divine ordinances. In spite, too, of every temptation to materialism, the Jew is always the most spiritual of all men.

Recently in a small work I summed this up in a phrase of our Jewish minister, Rathenau—"the call to Sinai." Friends who came to this phrase said it was not quite clear what it meant. Quite simply it meant this: so long as the Jew pursues these two principles, cultivating his natural gift for intellectual liberation, for critical enlightenment, on one side; and on the other, in equal measure, obeying his people's historical mission as the conservative upholder of men's spiritual tradition, of the law and order of God's ordaining—so long as the Jewish spirit is harnessed to these

two tendencies, it is the greatest of enrichments within any nation.

But in Germany a degenerate form of this Jewish spirit pushed its way into the foreground, frivolously juggling with anything and everything, taking pleasure in unmasking everything of moral worth, and placing itself at the head of a literature in which, with a sort of intellectual masochism, all the bounds were torn down which human civilization has set up to restrain its own dangerous and self-destroying lusts.

I do not forget that that is only one side of the picture. I call to mind such genuinely conservative men as Julius Stahl, the intellectual founder of our Prussian conservatism. To describe the part played by the German Jews in German intellectual advance in the past hundred and fifty years would involve writing the whole history of that advance. I am very far from regarding this as a misappropriation of the German spirit.

What substance could there be, indeed, in such a charge? You will not wish to suggest that I ever adhered to what is popularly called racial anti-Semitism. I cannot call the Jewish Germans who have been German citizens for generations "the alien corn," as Mr. Somerset Maugham does in one of his novels. The Jewish strain is nothing more and nothing less than one of the German strains, with the special characteristics of the Germans, just as any other of our many German strains. There can thus be no other "settlement" for the future than that the Jewish German is and always will be a German, just as the Bavarian Ger-

man or the Rhineland or Pomeranian German is. You will infer that I am in favor of the complete assimilation of the Jews, and I do, indeed, regard assimilation as the obvious course. It is no less obvious that historic differences which have existed for two thousand years will not disappear in a hundred. Assimilation does not mean that every distinctive trait must entirely disappear. There is no more reason for desiring that than that the Bavarian or Pomeranian should sink into uniformity with a single universal type of German.

I have had various friends among Jewish Germans, and among no other Germans have I found more understanding than among the Jewish. I think my efforts to counter the anti-Semitic enterprises of the Nazi party in Danzig during my period of office were not wholly unsuccessful. But let me return to another point which you raise in your letter. There are people with whom the racial differences in human beings weigh so heavily that in spite of all desires for civil equality they think marriages between Jewish and non-Jewish Germans should be prevented. They speak of the typical characteristics, the bastardizations, which show themselves in the product of such unions of racially unsuited partners.

You apostrophize me as a farmer, and you feel that you can excuse my supposed anti-Semitism as a transfer of a stock breeder's ideas to politics. My dear friend, from the breeder's standpoint man is, obviously, the most utterly neglected living being in the world. And certainly, from a biological standpoint, there do exist among human beings

differences which produce the same results as among the various "breeds" in our animal races. To keep such breeds pure and not to allow them to intermingle is certainly prudent from the farmer's point of view. But you know as well as I do that, beyond this one point, there is nothing to "breed" for. There is another fact, the remarkable phenomenon that what we call our races depends enormously on the environment, that there are local types that propagate themselves time after time, even if another breed is introduced.

Now, please, transfer this fact to man as a biological creature. I say expressly biological, not intellectual or moral. What happens then? There are differences in "breeds" which have nothing in common with national or lingual demarcations. You may find local and constitutional types that occur together independently of all racial relationship. In face of that fact, is there any sense in identifying races with tongues or nations? If you "cross" these breeds, you may find, biologically speaking, many of the results that are always found in the mixture of different breeds—the disappearance of special characteristics and the averaging of qualities down to a level beneath the special qualities of each breed. But you will also frequently find specially brilliant individuals of the form known to breeders as the luxuriant bastard form. It is not homozygous and not inheritable. Very rarely, extremely rarely, does cross-breeding produce the inheritable "plus" variation, the stock-breeder's supreme piece of good fortune.

But let us keep to the human sphere. So soon as we come

to man as a moral or intellectual being, we know absolutely nothing. But what I wanted to point out is that we know nothing even when we consider him biologically. The truth is just the opposite of what you suggested. My life as a farmer did not lead me into anti-Semitism but, on the contrary, taught me the absurdity of these racial ideas and prevented me from ever being influenced in any way by them.

Why, you will object, did not the vulgar anti-Semitism of the Nazi party prevent me from joining it? The answer is easy. We regarded anti-Semitism as no more real a point than any other in the very stupid Nazi program, which was so obviously not meant to be taken seriously. I had so little belief in the anti-Semitic hullabaloo that I never broke off relations with Jewish acquaintances. I took it no more seriously than the abuse of the Freemasons. I may say on that point that I was myself a Freemason, out of respect for parental and family traditions just as much as from personal inclination. You know that our Prussian grand lodges were neither anti-Christian nor revolutionary as in some countries, but actively Christian and national as in this country of England. It never occurred to me that there was any need to shield the lodges, and I only ceased to be connected with Freemasonry when my lodge dissolved itself.

All these things were much less simple than the outsider imagines. The anti-Semitism of the Nazi movement seemed to us to be a relic from the period of its origin in the inflation years, when there had been a certain spread of anti-

Semitism in Germany. Such relics of earlier episodes are carried on by various parties out of a dislike of bringing in special resolutions for the amendment of a program that has once been fixed. We were mistaken on the question of the reality of Nazi anti-Semitism; it became a vital point for the movement. Why? I have explained this over and over again in my writings. But it cannot be too often pointed out that here again it was Marxism that created in the revolutionary class struggle the myth of a personified object of hatred and contempt. The part played by the bourgeois in popular Marxism is played in popular Nazism by the Jew. It is a simple transposition from the world of ideas of one revolutionary doctrine into that of another. The technique of mass propaganda demands such personifications. The Marxist one was of no use to Hitler because he was out to end the class war in his own fashion by uniting proletarians and bourgeois in a "national community." Thus another lay figure had to be set up. But the principle of these inventions must be sought in socialism, in Marx and Sorel.

I myself regarded anti-Semitism as a passing outbreak of deluded mass instincts which would disappear of its own accord with the gradual return to normal conditions. A deputation of Jewish citizens of Danzig came to me as President to complain of persecution. I told them that they must have patience and must remember that we were all in the midst of a revolution; we were doing all we could to bring it to an end and so to restore legality and civil equal-

ity for our Jewish fellow-citizens as for the rest. This was the substance of my reply, and it was my own belief.

But there is another aspect of anti-Semitism to which I must refer because it is of a good deal of importance. It is the Jew himself who, consciously or unconsciously, holds to the maintenance of the purity of the present-day Jewish race as the inmost essence of his faith. The Jewish question is an eternal one because it is rooted in the metaphysical. However such sections of the Jewish people may secede and mingle with other peoples, there will always be a residue that is concerned for the maintenance of its purity, for the sake of the burden that was laid upon Israel. The burden of humanity, the second humanity, not Adam, but the humanity that is God's people.

On this subject we can only speak in language that must of necessity remain unintelligible if the conception of "divine revelation" is nothing more to us than a fantasy of pre-scientific thought. In his civil relations the Jew is in eternal tension between the two creative impulses of his spirit. Everywhere he is on the side of freedom, criticism, reason; yet his great past as the oldest of the Western peoples carries him constantly back to tradition, law, obedience, order. Politically he must always come down on the side of every emancipation movement because he can only expect and assure the full unfolding of his individuality under a regime of liberty. But, nonetheless, he must endeavor to impress on the peoples among whom he lives his people's great qualities of order, traditionalism, authority. He does this in this country. He does it in France. In

Germany we had few remaining Jewish citizens who were genuinely conservative. If Jews were on the side that is politically called the Right, it was in order to protect the interests of property. I hope that in the future there will be more Jewish men of genius on the side of a true and great union of all the elements of human tradition.

GERMANY SEEN FROM WITHIN

IT WAS YOUR questions that led me to this delicate subject. I share your view that program declarations are of no value. The less we talk of the so-called "Jewish question," the better. What matters is the practical attitude of each one of us in taking care to make not the slightest change from our normal behavior when we meet a Jewish fellow-citizen, and in taking no interest in questions of origin.

In the matter of sensitiveness I must admit to you that in my view there are limits beyond which personal attacks should not be ignored. When, in the election campaign, my former friends of the German Nationalist party displayed placards describing me as a "bankrupt farmer and neurasthenic writer on music," it was possible to be merely amused. When, three years later, my former Nazi party comrades put up a notice on the road to my farm, in letters a yard high, that "Rauschning, traitor to the people, lives here," that was less innocent: it was an invitation to acts of terrorism against my family and my farm. When, a few years after this, a well-known Social Democratic *émigré* in Paris with whom I had been engaged shortly before in endeavoring to lighten the lot of the interned *émigrés* de-

scribed me, on the appearance of my *Voice of Destruction* as a "blot on the *émigré* colony" and forbade me to cross the threshold of his flat, that was a method of controversy that I could not allow to rest there.

These men charge me with having remained a National Socialist although I knew that the Reichstag building had been set on fire on Göring's initiative. They say nothing as to the reason for my doing so, though it really needs no explanation. What good would my opposition have done in 1933? Was I to invite assassination? Should I have achieved anything beyond this? Why did not the Social Democratic members of parliament allow themselves to be assassinated instead of fleeing abroad? That same Social Democrat, who since the Nazis seized power has managed to carve out for himself a life of personal comfort and security, knew perfectly well that years later delegates from his party came out of Germany in order to protest against the measures of economic boycott. They declared at the time that they would soon get rid of Nazism. Do you suppose that these men did not know just as well as I did that the Reichstag had been set on fire? If they did not, they had, in any case, full knowledge of the acts of terrorism in the concentration camps, which, in my eyes, were very much worse than the fire.

Because we did not comfort ourselves with the thought that we should soon get rid of Nazism but considered it our duty to try to get rid of its evils from within, we remained Nazis. I did not secede from Nazism until I was convinced

that it was no longer possible to achieve anything in that direction.

I could tell you many details of the unsavory methods by which certain *émigrés* made propaganda against me, with the only result of reducing the efficacy of my work in enlightening opinion. In Paris these men went so far that in the end the semiofficial newspaper, *Le Temps*, wrote a leading article, in the midst of the war, on "The Rauschning Case," defending me against my own comrades in exile by pointing out that I had at least the courage to break with Nazism, which some sixty millions of people had not done.

I come to your other objection. My remark that I am no longer so sure that I did right in resigning office as President is open, you suggest, to misunderstanding. It lays me open to the charge of identifying myself with what is now going on in Germany, and thus of being what my opponents have always declared that I am—secretly a Nazi.

This is my answer: Only a few days ago I learned of the execution for high treason of some of my friends, with whom I had been working against Nazism until shortly before the outbreak of war. They were men of old families, some of them of advanced age; highly respected men, not professional revolutionaries or *déclassés*. When the story is told of the secret struggle in Germany against the Nazis—and it will be told—it will be found that it was not only "class-conscious proletarians" who fought against the reaction but just as much men of the former leading classes of society, "patriots," convinced of their duty to save Ger-

many from the road to the abyss. It will be found that, while there was a great deal of posing and pompous phrase-making among the *émigrés*, within Germany men of all classes and all confessions and all parties were at work. They risked their lives, some of them sacrificed them. They may have achieved nothing by the sacrifice, but they made it. In all these years men of this type have had not a minute's relief from the pressure of apprehension—"Have I been discovered? Is the Gestapo coming for me? Is it all over?"

My friend, those who have not lived through this—this starting at every knock on the door, at every car that comes into the courtyard, this apprehension of being followed by men in the street—those who have not lived through this should keep silent. Those who have not had experience of the way Germans are acting together and helping one another, from Communists to German Nationalists and to National Socialists, in the struggle against the Nazi criminals, paying no heed to differences of the past—those who have not had this experience should give up babbling of the "United Front." The thing they talk about and try to achieve in the most unsuitable way exists in the germ already in Germany. What is the good of resolutions approving common program points, of the formulation of general ideas, and of making a sort of unity out of all the fractions of parties? Is Nazism going to be killed by debating?

I am greatly afraid of one thing—that the idea may crop up one day of breaking the discipline Nazism has imposed on the German people by offering the people the lure of a

counter-government composed of *émigrés*; or that enemy propaganda may be devised with Socialist phrases and revolutionary general ideas. The old conditions for political warfare, for propaganda, no more exist today than the trench warfare of 1914-1918 or the guarantee of security through a Maginot Line and a strategic defensive.

I know the masses, and I know the classes that share power, in Germany. I knew them at a time when the majority of the men who were making fine phrases in exile had nothing to do but edit in their offices "reports from within Germany." I know how desperate is the feeling among the German officials and how reluctantly and with what repulsion the older officers and those in the less exalted posts play their part in this tragedy. I know the true feeling of my former party comrades. I could tell you of one man, a single example out of hundreds, a man of whom I have no reason at all for saying anything good, but who has only one wish—that he could exchange his high post for any sort of subordinate consular post abroad. I know how little faith and how little sense of security is felt by most of those party comrades who conceal their doubts and fears behind a "bold front."

We must take account also of the skepticism among the masses. Fine phrases and generalities no longer go down with them. Generalizations and programs are distrusted. Disappointment and disillusion are so great that the people are to be convinced only by deeds. They are not to be dragged out of their lethargy by pictures or promises of a liberty in the reality of which they no longer believe. These

masses will never again be tempted to stand behind any barricades in defense of liberty. Nothing will be achieved but the bringing to the fore of a new set of desperadoes and gangsters if anything else is attempted than to bring together the despairing patriots from all camps for the salvation of Germany. Anyone who imagines that the German opposition can be induced to take a stand against Nazism by offering the prospect of a Socialist revolution is deceiving himself. The German masses have no faith either in doctrinaire socialism or in revolution, and they have had all and more than they want of dictatorship, whether of nihilism or of the proletariat. They know that it only means a change of masters, that there will still be nothing but domination by officials and bosses, by whom they will simply be cheated.

These despairing and apathetic people can only be gradually convinced, by a long process of education and practical assistance and by the restoration of their private life, that new days have dawned, days of a gray existence but of genuine freedom. But with what right can those men claim the leadership in a free Germany who, however good and reputable their intentions may have been, were too weak, too unimaginative, too short of ideas to save the world from this tragedy? With what right do these men, whose own share of responsibility is heavy enough, assume the status of judges over us, who, even if we too made mistakes, can at least claim with the same right as they that our intentions were of the best.

No, my friend, these men have so completely ruined

themselves with the German people that they will compromise any future in which they take a leading part. Unquestionably the workers with their great organizations will form the basis of the future order. But Marxism and the political parties that represent it are done for. They have lost all credit; they belong to the past. They are so contrary to all that the future demands of us that their continued existence would be a heavy burden. Socialism—yes! But not socialism as a substitute for religion, not materialism as a philosophy, no dictatorship of the proletariat, no class-war myth, no use of the “bourgeois” as a bogey. The men who will create this great new labor movement in Germany will not be the old men of a time irrevocably past. These new men are being steeled in the struggle of the secret opposition within Germany. One day these men will be on the spot, and will act while the German *émigrés* are still busy with the debating of their “united program.”

That, my friend, was why I expressed my doubt whether it would not have been better to have remained in Germany in order to join in the work for her liberation instead of merely talking or writing about it.

I will not reply today to the question why the opposition in Germany could not prevent the war. It is impossible to say anything certain about that from outside the country. A well-informed German friend whom I met in the summer before the outbreak of war summed up his view of the strength of the opposition in these words: “On with the mobilization, the only means of getting rid of Nazism!” The political weakness of the Western democracies was a

great disappointment for years. They gave way to Hitler time after time. There were others in Germany who were afraid, as a general said to me in 1934, that advantage would be taken of Germany's weakness at the moment of the liquidation of Nazism. Since then a more than dubious propaganda must have raised that fear to a certainty. Later propaganda has been no happier. It has remained, to say the least, inconsistent and ambiguous.

An age has come to its end. With such ideas I walked today across the fields in this pleasant countryside. I had tea in "Ye Olde 14th-century Tearoom"; in front of the fire, beneath the old beams, I was filled with a sort of nostalgia. The picture of my house, with just such an "oak beam" roof, came vividly before me. I heard the stamping of the horses in the stables alongside, the clanking of the chains, I smelled all the splendid animal odor that clings to a farmer's home. Let me say a few words about the ideas of us farmers in this dying age.

It has been a period of rationalized farming, the time when men looked on the fields as a retort into which chemical ingredients were put and from which corresponding reactions of amazing harvests were then expected. It was the time of calculation and the treatment of agriculture as a business like any other. We had come under the spell of the rational materialism that placed its stamp on the whole of that superficially successful nineteenth century, with its positivism, its strangely color-blind Darwinism, its complete unconsciousness of the miracle of life with which agricul-

ture has to deal. It was the period of the increase of crops to the utmost limit.

But we late sons of this rationalist period who have had to learn the final outcome of its teachings have found with horror that this rationalism is a destructive exploitation of living energies. The yields diminished, the soils grew poor. Sulphate of ammonia made the soil sour; the strong dressings of lime ate up the humus; the limit of artificial increase had been reached. On my own farm I had had a field that in the sixties had been assessed as first class for taxation. It was the worst of my fields. My predecessor had allowed it to be entirely denuded of humus by growing successive crops of sugar beet, dressing with nitrogen, and leaving it without the necessary stable dung. If any dung was given it at all, it was poor and lifeless manure, turfed or steeped.

In my last years of farming I took down and studied the old farm records of our former family property, kept by my grandfather and great-grandfather. At that time, a hundred years ago, my great-grandfather had a yearly average for many years, on the poor soil of East Prussia, of twelve centners of wheat to the quarter-hectare, without artificial manuring. Today the same fields, with heavy nitrogen dressings, yield scarcely more than eight centners. But in the old time only part of the fields was under plow. The rest was sheep run and meadow; the fields that were tilled were given frequent and plentiful manurings with stable dung. An old farm of that type was an organic unity of many individual subdivisions brought into equilibrium through the experience of centuries; each subdivision had

its special function in regard to the whole. Each field was assigned only the task to which it was equal, and it was given what it needed for the maintenance of its fertility.

The nineteenth century threw all this to the winds, all the old experience and rules and the wise self-limitations. It could do all things and set out to achieve the impossible. "I love the man who wants the impossible," says Goethe. It was the motto of the nineteenth century. But man is not a demiurge, and today we have reached the limit of our powers.

I was reminded of all these things of which I have been gossiping to you by seeing once more today how carelessly, in this country too, competent farmers treat their stable manure. The dung has been lying now in heaps on the fields for months; it has neither been spread nor plowed in. The stubble has not been cleared, and snow and frost, the indispensable helpers of the soil ferments, have been left unavailed-of. The fertilizer is expected to make good all these things. You will reply that it is because of shortage of labor. At times of emergency like the present that is, of course, inevitable. And the soil will not rebel at once if it is robbed of its rights for a few years. Your government may demand that artificial manuring shall be applied so as to get the yield out of the fields. War, too, demands the impossible from men.

But we have been doing this for decades. It seemed to us that the line of progress, the essence of a new rationalized agriculture, was to become independent of nature and to force maximum yields against nature. Farming without

cattle, without stable manure, this was what the certificated agricultural expert in charge of our experimental farms recommended. And with slate and pencil it could be shown that it did bring in the maximum return. But for how long? And after that, what then? But who cared about that after-time? Had not everyone to take thought for the moment, for himself only? If the yield fell, could not the farm be sold? Could not the same process be successfully continued elsewhere, by "organized exploitation"?

I will not weary you further with this subject, but it was just the thinking men among us farmers who began to be uneasy about this humbug of progress and rationalization and to think once more of the farming methods of their forefathers. It seemed clear to us that we had reached the end of a period and that in agrarian policy and in farming there was a need, as elsewhere, for a "Conservative Revolution." I will not enter into the way Nazism took advantage of these justified anxieties of the farmers to hoax them with the picture of an economic order in which the farmer should pursue his occupation, not as a mere profit-making concern like so many others, but as a fixed and assured basis of existence.

But I should like to say this: everything that is true of farming may well be equally true of the life of a people. "Organized exploitation"—that is the phrase with which a later time will sum up that superficially grandiose and successful nineteenth century. Organized exploitation is the hidden fault in all the efforts of the doctrinaires and utopians who want to wrest man by force out of his own

nature in order to deliver him over to the tyranny of absolute reason. That party of rational progress, of rational planning, of a new order of society trained in accordance with the dicta of the doctrinaires: all that is of yesterday, and its sterility has been proved by these crises. It is all nineteenth century, all of the past, not the future. They are all out of date, all these men who are up in arms against the nature of things and against an order which is ordained by God. There is no pursuing this path without final destruction. Ahead of us on this path lies, both literally and figuratively, the destiny which an agricultural expert forecast in an inquiry some years ago—the conversion of Europe into a steppe.

STATE OF COMMUNITY

THE REBIRTH OF a strong state out of the element of the army, and on the other side a loose order in which the state, as it were, shares itself out, distributing its powers as King Lear distributed his among his daughters? I owe you some explanation of this plan.

You rightly object that I wanted to set up the state, with one hand, in a new form and, with the other hand, I proposed to take back again this centralist, militarist state. To make the state, so to speak, invisible is, you write, a good liberal tradition. But you are astonished to find any inclination in that direction in me. This seems to you one more proof of the confusion of mind that existed in Germany.

It is, as a matter of fact, one of the signs of the great historic crises that no clear and consistent will exists. Halévy, the great French *savant*, has pointed out the paradoxical fact that, in the liberal state, society tried to protect itself from the natural absolutist tendencies of the state and to give itself a firm foundation, not only by subjecting the state to constant supervision and criticism, but by virtually refusing obedience to it. Authority is again and again de-

stroyed and set up anew. That is a very subtle system. It is certainly the sublimest system of government ever created in the world. But what happens at times of the disappearance of outstanding personalities and of firm conceptions of right? At times when authorities cannot well be brought down because no new ones can be set up in their place?

We must try, therefore, to find some other way of protecting society from a state in process of acquiring omnipotence. Is it any solution to set up in place of the state an omnipotent totalitarian society? To transfer to society all the attributes of state absolutism and then to rest content with the feeling that the state has been overcome and made the instrument of society? That is so naïve a playing with words it is surprising that it should have been possible to delude intelligent people for half a century into imagining that it has any real meaning. What way out, then, could there be? Is chaos to be permitted to come simply out of fear of the misuse of a strong ruling power? Is no authority at all to be allowed to come into existence because there is a possibility that any authority may develop into a new Caesarism? The inner conflict from which European society is suffering has long consisted in something beyond the condition Halévy sees: the Conservative parties have demanded the almost unlimited strengthening of the state, together with an almost equally unlimited abolition of its economic functions, while the Socialist parties have demanded the unlimited extension of the state into every field of human life, but at the same time an unlimited weakening of its authority.

The conflict lies, indeed, in the fact that "freedom" is no longer "saved" by making the state as weak as possible because "indirect powers" then step into the place of the state and take over its absolutist tendencies. It is also impossible to abolish the authority of the state and at the same time transform all manifestations of human life into functions of the state. The accumulation of functions and the essential role of deciding authority in these functions leads inevitably to the absolute authority of the state, to the new absolutism, and to total loss of freedom.

Is there any possibility of setting up an authority which, without possessing any concrete functions of power, has so undisputed a character that its decisions are respected? It could only be an ethical authority—the pope, the emperor at the best periods of the late Middle Ages, in a more restricted degree a constitutional monarch, might possess such authority. But is there the remotest prospect of a universal recognition of this authority? Consequently an artificial authority is devised. It takes the form of the *charisma*, the "divine grace," of the leader in person. This brings us back once more to the Caesarian mass-democracy. How are we to escape from this vicious circle, within which we arrive in every direction at the new totalitarian absolutism, either in the form of the state of social services and totalitarian democracy with an integral social and economic planning, or in that of the totalitarian order of society of the socialized means of production, or in that of the state of total mobilization with an unlimited imperialism?

It is only in this inescapable crisis that it becomes clear how greatly the functioning of our political, social, and economic factors of order was dependent on an invisible state of equilibrium of elements which makes it so difficult to set effectual limits to the tendencies toward the accumulation of power that exist within every political element. The formation of overwhelming factors of power can be prevented by not investing a single sphere, such as the state or the classless society, but independent sectional spheres, with the functions of order. This would mean the legitimizing, as it were, of the "indirect powers" that are burdensome to the state and lead it astray: in other words, making them joint holders of sovereignty. This might lead to a new equilibrium. It would be a "pluralist" community.

But will not public life be smothered in so difficult a form? Will not such a system be paralyzed by the opposing elements? Will it be possible for united decisions to be arrived at?

I wanted to show you the outlines of our problems in envisaging the form of the state and a public order. I know that it is a very inadequate description, and all I want to show by means of it is that those who defend democratism and liberalism, much as if we were still in the classical period of the liberal era, have no right to sit in judgment over us. They should stand up and show us *their* solutions. Where are they?

Not to go wrong in these things is merely to show that one has not attempted anything. You know my dislike of all "rational construction." I think it is the only dislike we

both feel. I do not for a moment want in this discussion to suggest any such enterprise as that of "founding" a "pluralist community" instead of a state. How could it be "founded"? It can only grow in the course of a gradual and persistent evolution. This may also make it clear to you that it is only for the rational, dialectical intelligence that we "move amid inconsistencies" when we are out, at one and the same time, for a strong element of power and for the mediatizing of the state. The people who try to snuff out inconsistencies prove thereby that they are doctrinaires. For all organic things are balancings of contradictions and counter-forces.

Much of what I write here has, it is true, become clear to me only now and here in this country. But, even without this clear conception, at the back of our purposes of ten years ago, there was a correct realization that in these struggles no rational program is of any service but only a tenacious "muddling through." We were not out to create anything new on a basis of logic—where we attempted anything of the sort it was an utter failure—but to work on the already existing and give it new functions: to legalize committees, so to speak, and so to develop and expand existing institutions that they would maintain the working of "give and take" and compromise as the essence of democratic life and prevent sectional elements from claiming universality and exclusiveness. Such an order is not to be developed out of a rational, consistent, logical scheme; it is itself a continual compromise with its own inconsistencies, just as a human being is "*ein Mensch mit seinem Widerspruch.*"

I have repeatedly declared to you my "conservative" faith. It is that the unique, concrete historic process cannot be replaced by anything else, or anticipated. That is what I describe as the irreplaceable positivism, in the original sense, of the elements of the making of law and history. Every constructive effort on a reasoned basis is useless and is bound to lead to appalling confusion if it attempts to proceed straight from the desk, straight from its paper swaddling clothes, to reality. Concrete forces cannot be countered by proclamations and programs.

My second article of faith (and this, too, belongs to the genuinely conservative conceptions) is that the continuity of development, the historic *continuum*, must be maintained by all possible means and that no radical breach, no rent in tradition, must be permitted. Where anything of this kind occurs, the bacteria of abstractions and of doctrinaire ideas establish themselves in the wound, producing inflammation and abscesses, fever and mortal poisoning of the vital juices.

Some of the conceptions of political liberalism have now lost all practical significance. Among these are at least the ideas concerning a "constitutional state." The constitutional state is no longer an adequate guarantee of liberty. It is also insufficient protection from chaos or dictatorship. Some may doubt whether it can be reconstituted at all, others may think it can. If it is reconstituted, it must be permissible to search for other means, alternative or additional, of providing that guarantee.

May I be excused from discussing the question of "constitutional" versus "legal" state; the question whether, in

Max Weber's phrase, legality must be accepted as legitimacy, which, indeed, would enable all things to be declared legitimate, even the modern dictatorship-state? It is the liberal "legal state" that provides the intellectual and legislative weapons for the illiberal and antiliberal powers, whatever their origin.

The problem that faced us ten years ago seems to me to be the same within the nation and in its external relations. In international relations the system of national states with uncontrolled sovereignty can no longer be maintained; in home affairs uncontrolled individualism is no longer tolerable. How is a controlled sovereignty of nations to be created under such conditions as to preserve the utmost possible measure of free development? What form must the control of the individual take in order to permit him still a maximum of initiative and of liberty in private life?

These questions admit of no doctrinaire, final answer. They can only be given a practical solution. But it must at least be recognized that these questions exist and demand an answer.

XVII

THE PLURALIST COMMUNITY

YES—WHAT I wrote in my last letter about the conflict between two conceptions of the community, that of the French *Etat* and the British conception of the Commonwealth, was very sketchy—you are justified in that criticism. That conflict can only be resolved in a supernational order. The idea we entertained ten years ago, dimly and with all sorts of inconsistencies, was unworkable as a form of *national* life. It is the form of *supernational federations*. It is the form which your British Empire has taken. Within the national field the state must always impose itself in its old character of the instrument of order. Unfortunately we were compelled to embark on both enterprises at once—the renewal of a strong national state and the development of a free commonwealth of various nations. We were compelled to attempt both tasks because neither was realizable without the other. The federation was impossible without a center holding power in trust for the protection of the whole, and the formation of this center was impossible without a foreign policy of peaceful understanding and acceptance of obligations, since it was only so that the

accumulation of power would lose its aggressive significance.

You have rightly remarked that the problem is two-sided—a problem of internal political order and of the external or supernational order. But its two elements unquestionably hang together. The problem of a reordering of the system of foreign relations, in the form, say, of a great supernational federation, can only be solved if the internal political order of the members of the federation fulfills the necessary conditions. It is impossible to create a great federative community out of centralistically organized and dictatorially ruled member states. The principle of federation, that is to say, of the association of independent members, each with its own sphere of life and of responsible rule, can only be carried into practice if it becomes the recognized basis of all the legal institutions of political life within each member.

I must make mention also of another reason for the fact that our ideas of ten years ago led us inescapably into a cul-de-sac. There is not and cannot be such a thing as a corporative state. It would be virtually a contradiction in terms. There can be a corporative community. Thus we were trying, in effect, to square the circle. Autonomous corporations, insofar as they are genuinely so, can never be elements of the system of a centralist state. In such a state they inevitably degenerate at once into an instrument of the domination of the state.

This does not mean that autonomous bodies will have a controlling part to play in a future supernational fede-

tion. They will not, in any case, be the only element in the system; but they may well become auxiliaries in its maintenance, as unifying and synthesizing bodies in certain fields of the public and economic life of a federation. I have a few things to say on this point but will not embark on them at this moment because it would only complicate our discussion to do so.

But I should like to enter into some aspects of the autonomous body and what I have described as a pluralist community, in order to show you from this side also that we had serious reasons for our attempt to work with Nazism. The great French Revolution and liberalism tried to remove all the intermediate authorities between the individual and the state. The creation of such intermediate elements seemed to us to be the very thing that was needed for the ending of the individualist chaos. That meant the ending of freedom of association in the nineteenth-century sense and of the uncontrolled freedom of industry under economic liberalism. But it did not mean the end of an ordered personal liberty and of all private initiative in industry.

Such an order must obviously be met with hostility by the great trade unions. It means the complete overthrow of the personal elites that have come into existence in the course of the hundred years of class struggle. It also clearly means abandoning the plane of the liberal economic system, with its principle of automatic regulation by supply and demand. It brings us into a territory, too vast for survey, of indispensable agreements concerning things which in the past were decided by the individual *entrepreneur*. It

involves a *numerus clausus* for the businesses in each branch of industry and a regulation of output, sales, technical processes, consumption of material, quality of labor, price levels, and so on—ending, in effect, in a new mercantilism.

Such an order becomes altogether questionable, however, for another reason: one has to face the question whether new autonomous bodies can be set up in accordance with a rational scheme and whether this does not mean entering the field of doctrinaire construction, whereas the sound conservative system of development must be to give existing nuclei of such bodies the opportunity of growing into a completely autonomous system—in other words, to permit a multiplicity of members of that system. The breaking up of the great existing associations of the trade unions, for instance, in favor of an improvised system was a great mistake. These trade unions were bodies that had grown organically in the course of a long history. To abolish them, to destroy valuable institutions in order to enforce the creation of new ones with no tradition, simply for the sake of a thought-out scheme, was as unconservative as could be.

It is clear that self-governing bodies cannot be “organized.” They cannot be artificially created. They must grow. They are elements of an order only when they have a genuine life of their own. They are not such elements when they are simply decreed into existence. It is possible to build upon existing corporations, to reorganize them, to grant them extended functions. But the moment the state decrees their existence they become machinery of the

state. We arrive then at the phenomenon, so common at present, of *spurious self-government*, which affords a career for managers and produces a new bureaucracy with a tendency to assimilate itself to the state bureaucracy.

The pluralist order, if it has any future, must have the courage to construct without a clear rational plan and to make use of such elements as have vitality, even if the resulting lines of construction and perspectives seem to be contradictory. In our efforts of ten years ago we were in a dilemma. Either these autonomous bodies would devour the state, or they would become economic machinery of the state. But do all these objections dispose altogether of the idea of pluralism?

Economic abstractions need just as much qualification as social ones in practical life. Spheres of economic planning are no less necessary for the avoidance of crises with the unemployment they bring than are the directing elements of social services as the instruments of a juster system and of protection from want. But in order to achieve these aims it is not necessary that the organs for securing them should become organs of the power of the state and means of domination. The great institutions for social services have their models in century-old corporations for mutual aid. Obviously the social services or the economic directing associations cannot now be left to voluntary membership. Statutory corporations must come into existence in this field, with assigned public functions.

Insofar as autonomous bodies take over the administration of these tasks in place of organs of the state, the state

will be relieved of many functions. There will come into existence independent spheres in which those bodies will step into the place of the state. It is not merely a division of powers but a division of functions.

This does not mean the abolition of the state, but it is certainly true that such a form of state will not be in a position to pursue aims of imperialist expansion. Federations are always systems of maintenance and defense, not unions for aggression.

Here, it seems to me, the importance of autonomous bodies to a future peaceful order in the world becomes obvious. Even when peace comes, it will be impossible to avoid a new system of sovereign states, with all the evils of economic protectionism and ultimately of political rivalries, however skillfully the new national or federal frontiers are drawn, unless the organs of economic co-operation and planning and those of the social order and of social aid are taken out of the sphere of the national states or federations and made into independent supernational bodies subject to public international law. Here is a sphere for the building up of positive international law, and a sphere of co-operation that is not confined, as in the time of the League of Nations, to mere declamation. The full benefit of the development of statutory self-governing bodies in the fields of economic control and planning and of social services will only be felt in a supernational peace order in which the development of new centralist organs of power with expansionist aims is eschewed.

XVIII

WESTERN CHRISTENDOM

MY IDEAS OF the Russian problem are entirely different. The conclusions you suggest can be no more than partial conclusions in face of so complex a subject. Needless to say, my conclusions on Russia have changed as time has passed; have not yours? I see in Stalin today the great realistic liquidator of Russian doctrinairism. That makes your further question superfluous. There can be no question for me of any choice between Trotzkyism and Stalinism. Nothing seemed to me more senseless than the promotion in Germany of a sort of Trotzkyism with the idea of weakening the internal resistance of the German people by revolutionary influences of that sort.

Trotzkyism is a phase that has passed, and rightly so, a phase that has been ended. I see in Stalin's leadership today the able and certainly grandiose liquidation of a utopian doctrinairism, while securing what I have described as one of the main objectives of our own efforts in Germany, the preservation of *continuity of development*. Stalin has not permitted a further revolutionary or counter-revolutionary breach to come. It seems to me that that is a great achievement in statesmanship.

But if that is how matters stand, I have really answered your other questions already. What could be set in place of this Soviet Union? Do you think there are any sections of the people who could achieve by means of a radical revolutionary upheaval in Russia anything else but further bloodshed and chaos? Is it suggested that in place of the Soviet Union there should be installed a union of liberalist national democracies? On what classes could they be based? On a nonexistent middle class? Forgive me if I say that such questions are absurd. No politician in his senses can desire anything else but the further preservation of "continuity of development" in Soviet Russia with no further revolutionary upheaval.

You see, I have been trying to make two things clear: that democracy is not identical with particular institutions and that among the various peoples it must develop different forms and institutions of its own. For a Western European it is not easy to perceive under the Soviet regime the lines of an individual form of democracy. I admit that I had difficulty myself in realizing them. But it must in fairness be admitted that the Soviet Union shows within its Westernizing development all the elements of our civilization.

I will candidly show you the limits of my understanding of Russian conditions. These limits are drawn at the stage at which the Russian system has remained one of total rationalism and of doctrinaire materialism. It will be even more difficult for the Russian Revolution to efface the marks of its doctrinaire birth than it would have been for

the great French Revolution to do so. No liquidation of its Jacobin phase will make any difference to that. It is for us to respect the fact as a national necessity. Perhaps we can make it intelligible to ourselves as an inevitably exaggerated valuation of intellectualism in a people mystical and irrational by nature. So long as this remains a national phenomenon of the Russian Revolution, we have nothing to say against it. It calls for active resistance from us only when doctrinaire communism comes forward with ambitions of expansion and the claim to universal and exclusive validity.

But I want to suggest to you another thing that has occurred to me, perhaps a simple and even an idle thought. No people can live in the long run on one extreme of its nature. The overemphasis invites a reaction. I am convinced that sooner or later there will be an elemental movement of re-Christianization in Russia. Not until, in the great liquidation of the utopianism and doctrinairism of the Soviet Union, the time has come when the elements of the great Christian tradition are once more admitted will the circle have been completed and a new equilibrium be found. Then we may see what Russia's great imaginative prophets have foretold, the emergence in a renascent Russia of a new spiritual flowering, in the van of coming centuries.

The thing that in Hitler would be unreal was grossly insincere, a return to respect for Christianity, may suddenly become reality in this great Russian people, of whose nature we have only a few disparate manifestations. I

should not hesitate to describe Stalin as one of the really great men of his time if in this case, too, he had the foresight needed and would liquidate a further section of the doctrinaire thinking of his party. You know my positive reverence for Dostoyevsky. It was as a wounded man in the hospital in the last war that I first learned to know that great daemonic world of his. My first small article published in a newspaper of the Army of the East was a sketch concerned with Dostoyevsky's Russia. That great mystical Christian Russia is not dead. It is imperishable. I believe in the re-Christianization of that great people. Not until that happens shall we be able to speak once more of a Western Christendom and a Christian Europe.

I come back to our own problems, to our efforts to restore the Christian character of our German public and private life. Re-Christianization cannot be enforced, either outwardly or inwardly—not even outwardly, because this, with no inner reality, would be the deepest of all perdition. Thus there is one element in the Nazi despotism that I welcome as providential—its anti-Christian persecutions. Just think what the position would have been if in addition to all else Hitler had appropriated and misused the elements of Christianity, and so robbed them of all virtue. As it is, we have still on our side the strongest of all regenerative forces.

Nevertheless I have no faith in any very spectacular form of future re-Christianization. Nor, I confess, should I be at all glad to see any other than a silent and undemonstrative one. It is to be hoped that we shall be spared

any such thing as the Christian faith becoming "the thing." In any case we must think of some such organization as the Catholic "Christian Action." I recently finished a little work, *Das Christliche Gemeinwesen*, devoted to the tasks and the limitations of such an organization. I should like you to read it in connection with what I am saying here. I only want to add a few remarks. I must confess to you that our sense of the necessity of re-Christianization was one of our reasons for trying to work with Nazism. It would take me too far to try to make that really plausible in your eyes. I should have to try to describe for you the situation of our Protestant churches as we laymen saw it ten to fifteen years ago.

We regarded it as essential to get away from the denominations of the Evangelical churches and to found a united German Church. Our motives were not rationalistic; we simply regarded these denominational differences as wholly unimportant in face of the great spiritual crisis. It seemed necessary to us also to remove the official, state character of our churches. There were other considerations, especially two which may seem contradictory. The slogan "German Christians" had had its forerunner, long before the great world war, in a slogan invented by Arthur Bonus, "The Germanization of Christianity." The other consideration was connected with the idea of a universal Christian *ecumene*. There was no necessity for the "German Christian" movement to end in neo-paganism or an empty pantheism. Those who have been interested in the great Christian mission work of recent decades know that in all the

non-Christian regions the Christian message is conveyed with attention to the indigenous ideas and customs and social institutions. The mission work among the non-Christian world of the West should, it seemed to us, pursue an analogous method. The Christian message could and should be associated with the elements of nationalism and socialism. It would be compelled then, in compensation for this, to go far beyond the current ideas of Western Christendom, but it should also work toward a future Christian unity.

I will not enter here into the question how much of this was mistaken and potentially anti-Christian. The readiness certainly existed for the acceptance of a new and sturdy preaching of the Gospel with a closer reference to our vital needs of today. There were a few months during the Nazi rising in which the churches suddenly began to fill, and even the masses of the great cities grew curious to see whether a different language from that of the past was to be heard from the pulpit. The subsequent development of the "German Christians" rapidly emptied the churches again. The masses very quickly sensed the fact that all that was at issue was a race for offices of profit and that the *arrivé* pastors and church dignitaries were concerned only for the preservation or improvement of their positions by sycophancy toward the new lords of the state.

For a time I was the chairman of our regional synod; I was also a member of the National Synod, the new constituent assembly of the "German Church." Thus I had frequent opportunities of meeting the notorious Bishop

Muller, the "*Reichsbischof*"—the politically appointed Nazi Primate. I very soon resigned from these offices and declined the suggestion made to me in Berlin that I should take the office held a few years later by Kerrl, virtually that of Minister for the Church.

Perhaps the whole idea from which we started in our desire for a process of re-Christianization was mistaken. Our desire was inspired, perhaps, not by Christian motives, but by despair at the lack of an ethical basis in our state and society. Our reflections had certainly not ripened sufficiently to bring us anything but confusion and the spreading of confusion. But it seems to me that in one direction at least we were on the right path. In the face of the superficial optimism of the credulous faith in progress as a substitute for religion, we realized the limits of all external safeguards in life, and we had a vivid appreciation of the old dark warning *sunt lacrimae rerum*—the lesson of the eternal nature of imperfection, of the tears that are in all things.

Yes, another of our ideas was, I think, justified. In what way are state and society Christian? Let us confess that we were entirely in the dark and were being abandoned by our spiritual leaders. (I am speaking here of the Evangelical Church.) The state, we were told, is essentially evil. It obeys its own laws. It can never be Christian. It is an order *sui generis*. To live in it according to its laws, to accommodate ourselves to it, is a Christian duty. To be of service even to evil—that is the tragedy of this eon, in which we belong to two spheres of life. We must never

try to combine the two. If we do we shall arrive at the absolute confusion amid which man goes to his fall. Christianity, faith, is only for the individual in isolation. It concerns only the individual soul, no less alone with its destiny than a man on his deathbed.

So we were told, and it was this that most profoundly repelled us. This division of the indivisible life seemed to us absurd and one of the sources of nihilism. We were out for the unity of life and the unity of responsibility. It seemed to us almost the root of all the evils of our time, this basing of our life on earth on a dual responsibility. How could there be any rebirth of our society and civilization without the all-important help of the Christian element? Yet, if Christianity stood aside in a sphere of its own, unconcerned with the life of the state and society, and if the intellectual and political activities of the community were thus left in independence of the Christian judgment, was not Christianity condemned in advance to futility?

XIX

DELIRIUM

IT IS NOT I who am forcing you to relearn but the crisis itself. My interpretation of Soviet Russia seems fantastic to you. I admit that it has its inconsistencies. The propaganda of the Comintern drives us to the conclusion that the aim of world revolution and of the destruction of the "capitalist powers" has not been given up. But is not the policy of great states toward the Soviet Union, as it sees it, perhaps equally ambiguous? Only under certain conditions would a decisive victory for the democracies in this war involve no danger for the Soviet Union. Must it not, then, so long as these conditions do not exist, see to it that there shall be no decisive victory? That is the one condition for the maintenance of a balance which Russia regards as the only guarantee of her full independence.

Moreover, in the phase now attained in its internal development, the Soviet Union must desire anything rather than a total collapse in central Europe, leading to a sort of recapitulation of the phases through which Russia has passed in the last twenty-five years. Such phases, with the revival they will obviously bring of radical doctrinaire influences, would be bound to be regarded by the Soviet

Union of today as "Trotzkyist intrigues." They would involve it in the risk that conditions from which it has recovered might become virulent again.

Nazism, too, has thrown down its crutches of doctrine, though in another, a negative, sense: it admits now only its concrete power-policy. It, too, has liquidated its utopianism. Thus there may continue to be grounds for understanding between these two realist powers, especially if Nazism falls into difficulties. Political biologism might form a common platform for Bolshevism and Nazism if their political and economic interests should make co-operation between them appear desirable to both.

This biologism of Hitler's, as I described it in *The Voice of Destruction*, is certainly an interesting phenomenon; it is one that disquiets many people. For Hitler only expresses in a puerile and confused form what many people who have no intention of having anything to do with Nazism have bandied about as the esoteric message of the truly "free" spirits. Many physicians, engineers, and psychologizing authors of my acquaintance have confided to me that, "That fellow is right. What a show-up for us!"

What Hitler achieved was not only the final step in this field from which the intellectuals shrank back; he was also the true revolutionary in face of the half and quarter revolutionaries, those who made revolution only in their paper world. That is one explanation of the seductiveness of Nazism.

Nietzsche and Marx Hitler's direct forerunners! That was supremely annoying. But there was no denying it.

Nor was there any denying that, by means of the revolutionary technique learned by spying on other revolutions, Germany had been made into the mass-collective at which other people besides Hitler had aimed. How maddening for those people! Revolution! The idea of revolution had been toyed with for so long that when the revolution came it was entirely overlooked.

There was a whole class of people in Germany who considered themselves revolutionaries if their personal life was irregular, and another class who tried to prove to other people that they were revolutionaries by the extravagance of their doctrines; but both classes belonged at most by temperament to the Philistine bohemians and intellectual pettifoggers. No wonder they did not recognize the true revolutionary temperament in its new contemporary guise or thought poorly of it if they did. They still clung to antique models and doctrines, and interpreted the new world by old-fashioned standards; they spoke an artificial language and did not see that the revolution they had so long been prophesying had come and entirely by the hands of others.

There was also the permanent though pleasantly tempered revolution of liberalism, with its doctrine of progress. At a time when everything cried out for preservation and protection, was it not the very things that were accounted liberal and progressive, and therefore democratic, that worked for dissolution and disintegration and the exposure of ideas as illusory, and thus undermined all belief, to the greater glory of the spirit that was its own negation? It

was the liberal guards at the palace gates of democracy who allowed their palace to be burned down and reveled in the flames. Here, too, what confusion of mind!

I think I have already recalled to you Horace's phrase of the "period of delirium" that preceded the "Great Peace." There are periods of debasement in which the best of good will is impotent, losing the straight path and wandering into the scrub. My historical studies early familiarized me with this problem. I cannot expect to hold your interest along this path. I find a similar situation toward the end of the Middle Ages, in the fifteenth century, when a new consciousness was in process of formation, new political and spiritual elements were coming to the fore, and all classes were in the grip of a profound demoralization. The best plans, the boldest ideas, the noblest aims are useless at such times of crisis and epochs of great change. Everything is at the mercy of an enigmatic aberration, a lust of perversion. With the best intentions the most unsuitable means are chosen; no one is able to master the universal doom. A deep resignation falls upon all men. Hopelessness throws its gloom over everything. At such times great processes of thought go up once more in flames amid the destructive glow of fanaticism.

My small special field, the study of which has led me to these remarks, yielded by chance years ago a sketch of this sort of period, the splendid vision of a forgotten writer of the late scholastic period who deduced peace and harmony for the world, under the figure of a "marriage," from a synthesis of all elements into a great and lasting equilibrium.

Such utopias are the compensations of times of universal delirium.

Are our utopias and rationalizing doctrines anything more? Do you remember the inward disintegration in that Germany with its surface orderliness and its busy renovation after the last war? Was not its whole chaotic life, with its cynicism and its utter lack of restraint, in crying need of discipline, of directives, of a settled course?

Men talked at that time of the end of an age, of inescapable destiny, of an "Age of the Caesars" inevitably approaching. Even men of the Hugenberg group, men who considered themselves conservatives, were fired by what they thought the heroic idea that the inevitable must be welcomed. It was the manly course not to try to escape from it but to shape it as far as was possible in this age—by the control of industrial technique, by rational planning, and by the subjection and domination of the masses. To few did it occur that the West is far from having fulfilled the number of its days, that, indeed, it has its last and finest flowering yet to come.

I must turn once more against your realism. It may be that I see this crisis too much *sub specie aeternitatis*. In any case, you see it too simply. You speak of the simple fact that all this amounts to no more than the war of a rising world power against one that is determined to maintain its place in the world. Do you not realize that in that simplification you are virtually playing Hitler's game? That is the blow of the whip with which he compels the masses to give him their allegiance. "*Ôte-toi, que je m'y*

mette,” “Get up and make room for me”—the revolutionary right of the young and energetic against the old and inefficient (“To youth eternal God gives way in delight,” says Richard Wagner, Hitler’s favorite poet); the eternal rhythm of life’s renewal—if nothing more than this were at stake, how would you propose to counter Nazism?

Permit me a phrase which I beg you to regard as not merely a debating subtlety: political realism can itself grow into a doctrine. What place in such a world of severely logical realism has the conception of freedom and of personal moral responsibility? What evidence could you offer of the superiority of your country’s way of life, other than that of a sphere which has nothing to do with material things and “facts” and which is nevertheless a “reality”?

Realism, which is always something of an equivalent for cynicism, is regarded all over the world as the first necessity in dealing with political issues, as protection against the illusions of utopias and doctrinaire enthusiasm. But if it is itself doctrinaire, political aims become perverted, as happened in Germany.

This brings me back to a subject that is the most difficult of all if one is trying to explain the development of affairs in Germany. There is certainly no difficulty in the way of the very simple verdict to which you and the great majority of all critics are inclined: that the German nation, eager for revenge and lusting for war, has constructed a subtle political organization behind the scenes in order to conceal its preparations for war until it was ready to strike and could drop all disguise.

As I write this I realize how simple and convincing that outlook is and how hopeless it must be to try to upset so unambiguous a verdict by advancing what must seem to you confused, contradictory, and absurd arguments. I will suggest another picture. You knew this Germany up to the last years before the present war. Do you remember that out of the midst of the stagnation of political life before the Nazis came into power a vast spiritual awakening showed itself such as no other of the great nations of Europe or the world experienced at that time? That in no way conflicts with my interpretation. It is only one of the characteristic features of that period of contradictions. Had you not the feeling that the rest of the world, in comparison with that awakening, was still in a state of slumber, of inertia and expectation? That "spiritual pilgrimage" in search of new dwellings was not confined to the abandonment of old elements of order and old ideas; it had something of the character of a general revision of all human standards and ideas in a spirit of close concern for veracity. It came as a final and complete liquidation of false ideologies in order to clear the way for a great and fruitful renascence of the civilization of Western Christendom, an attempt at a new spiritual synthesis.

On this subject might I quote to you a few sentences from an article which I published a little while ago in one of your reviews?

Those who played a conscious part in the intellectual life of the German nation before the National Socialist rising

were entirely carried away by earnestness in research and in the pursuit of truth. The fruits of their labours were contributed from the remotest fields of research. To the participant engaged not professionally but as a layman and student, the splendour of a great coming age of intellectual synthesis seemed to be promised. Those who were of sufficient independence of mind to draw a certain common element from the works of Heidegger and from the dialectical theology of Karl Barth, two writers worlds apart, those who shared in the observance of the rebirth, scarcely imaginable forty years earlier, of a great Catholic philosophy and imaginative literature, those who were able to bring into a common framework the discoveries in the border regions of scientific study, could not fail to be convinced that we stood not at the end of Western culture but on the threshold of its highest spiritual fulfilment. All seemed to be waiting for spiritual and moral impulses to produce a new political and social order, not by revolutionary violence but, step by step, in deliberate evolutionary reform.

Does this belong merely to the "pseudo-creative energy of hysteria" to which I have so often referred? Were these only the iridescent colors of decay? Today every spiritual vestige of those years has been effaced. It seems as if nothing of it all ever existed. Was it, then, as unsound and unreal as our own political ideas? The German intellect and German science have come to grief. They have not only capitulated to force, they have committed suicide.

But why? Must they bear the stigma of a special lack of character?

I myself thought so. In the despair of those years we could see no other explanation. But there is an explanation. That "*wertefreie Wissenschaft*," my friend, that science free from arbitrary postulates, how antiquated it is, how outworn is that self-satisfied nominalism! Only those can still accept it as sound who took no part in the profound spiritual struggles of the last generation and did not experience its spiritual "awakening." Knowledge can only exist on the basis of accepted postulates, of a "confession" —a fact which our doctrinaires of yesterday and our popular enlighteners of the day before yesterday failed to realize.

Where there is no fundamental belief, science becomes the hired interpretation of the particular ideology in power. But even where it scorns to be that, it must seek the foundation of a belief, the assertion of a spiritual basis, in order to exist.

Here, it seems to me, is one of the reasons for the total perversion. The great law-givers who provide a universal confession as the foundation of the new spiritual life were not to be found. It is then that the temptation arises to flee to materialist short-cut solutions. The spirit capitulates and leaps to its death as vitalism breaks in. Then men tread once more on the brightly colored rainbow bridges of doctrinaire thought.

But I must get back to the political sphere and leave that of the spiritual history of the past. In a remarkable lecture

on "Politics as a Profession," delivered in 1919, Max Weber, the great German savant, pointed to a fundamental fact of all history, "That the ultimate result of political activity is often—indeed, virtually as a regular thing—in a completely inadequate, often a virtually paradoxical, relation to its original purpose." This was what happened to our efforts. In that "carnival which is decorated with the proud name of revolution," to use Weber's words, the only choice we had was either "leader-democracy with its machine or leaderless democracy, that is to say, the leadership of the professional politician without profession." In Germany we had the latter, "the thing," in Weber's words, "that the party opposition of the moment usually calls the rule of the cabal."

It was this rule that brought us to a dead end under the Weimar regime. Party machines came into existence in Germany, and with them the beginnings of leader-democracies. It was an inescapable process. Socialism began it. The charismatic person of the leader and the apparatus of control drawn from the masses were the poles of the leader-democracy. But the control of the masses is organized only by "premiums." The psychological significance of these is, in Max Weber's words, "under the conditions of the modern class war the gratification of hatred and vengefulness, above all of resentment and the sense of the need for a pseudo-ethical execution of justice."

Eternally it means "adventure, victory, booty, power, and profitable offices." The things achieved by the leader, whose success depends on the functioning of his apparatus

of control, "are not in his power, but are prescribed to him by those motives of action, ethically mainly low motives, of his following, who are only kept within bounds so long as at least a part of the association is inspired by genuine faith in his person and his cause."

This diagnosis was given at a time when Nazism was still afar off and no sign of it yet existed. "Let us talk together in ten years' time," said Weber to his audience, "long after the time of the reaction has come." What would then become of "you who at present feel yourselves to be politicians with a conscience and who feel the intoxication of this revolution"?

We younger men, turning away in disgust from the intoxication of that revolution and faced with only the inescapable choice between a leaderless democracy and a Caesarian form of the plebiscitary mass-democracy, hurled ourselves against the current. Was there a third way out? A leadership without the elements of a party machine with its unavoidable "legitimization of the lust for vengeance and power, booty and place"? Was there a form of democracy in which an institution of the disinterested conciliation of interests possessed legitimate authority and so had no need for the demagogic methods of mass propaganda and the working of the "machine"?

The only way out we could see, within our historic experience, was through the restoration of the monarchy. In this we saw the only means of escape from the confusion and self-destruction into which our people had plunged. But the path of the restoration of the monarchy, save as a

brief episode, was difficult. In order to overcome the pseudo-democracy of political machines and charismatic leaders, we, too, needed a machine and a leader.

We needed these, not because we wanted any war of *revanche*, not because we wanted hegemony in Europe, not because we were antidemocratic and antiliberal, but because we were convinced that we could save Western civilization from the internal and external forces of disintegration and self-destruction only along our own path. This was the motive of our alliance with Nazism: we hoped to gain the party machine for our aims, the machine that seemed to us to be indispensable so long as the genuine order and genuine authority after which we were striving was not assured.

These considerations still retain their force. In putting them to practical effect we erred and could not but err, but they will outlive this war, and will, indeed, only then become operative. For they were right. We were not wrong in our motives, and I adhere to them just as much as ten years ago.

But—let me quote Weber once more—anyone who is politically active comes into contact “with the diabolical powers that lurk beneath all violence.” He must be ready to find that right motives are no guarantee of right results. He must be prepared for the paradoxical aberration of his designs which we all suffered in those years.

We saw the necessary new awakening, intellectual and political, in the shape of a *revolution*, a conservative one but nevertheless a revolution, with the rhetoric and pas-

sion, the disorder and destruction, that that implied. We were out to wrest that which we lacked, by the energies of the revolution, from the thrones of whatever gods there be. But there is no conservative revolution; in the field of conservative restoration there can be no revolutionary breach but only cautious construction. There lies the metaphysical error. And so, though in a higher and a figurative sense, you are right: instead of patiently building we wanted to achieve something by force.

Elie J. Bois recently wrote in an article of the long series of mistakes that gradually corrupted the democratic regime in France, paralyzed social life, and unmanned the country. This applies exactly to Germany, except that, in addition, our country lacked all experience and routine in political life, so that everything was much more brutally and nakedly revealed. Bois writes sympathetically of Blum. Everyone will appreciate that who came even momentarily into touch with that French politician and realized his generous spirit. Bois puts into his mouth an imaginary confession that he placed too much trust in human perfection and in that of the masses; he believed too well in the noble ideas of equality among men, collective security, and eternal peace.

Yes, utopianism lies not only in doctrines but in optimism concerning human nature, an optimism unknown in the Christian ages. It is in human nature that the element lies which again and again frightens us out of our enterprises for improving the world. That does not mean that such humane but laborious enterprises should be abandoned. It

means, however, that the limitations must be recognized, the limitations of our opportunities, of our security, and of our dreams and utopias.

We have entered the period of self-liquidation of utopias and doctrines. Not until this process is complete shall we be ripe for a truly conservative order resulting from the synthesis of all our traditional and historic elements. We are in the midst of the liquidation of the doctrines of nationalism, socialism, rationalism, and liberalism, and of the demarcation of the boundaries within which they are serviceable and constructive influences. That is the meaning of the delirium—and perhaps the gain from it.

THE CLOSED ABYSS

OTHER NATIONS, TOO, have struggled hard to achieve a balanced order and have passed through periods of delirium. I will not repeat what I have written already. What German tradition is there within the Western tradition? The Frenchman can link up with every point of his history, and finds everywhere the single thread which runs through all his political and intellectual achievements. The breaches in French history, tumultuous as they seem to us, are no more than violent swings of the pendulum about a point of rest always attainable. The Briton lives in a permanent stream of innovation; he has no experiences of brusque interruptions; he is continually casting off the old and assimilating the new.

But where has the German a red thread passing through his history? Must we not try, then, to secure in a new common destiny the common element we lack? Is not this one of the motives of Pan-Germanism, of German chauvinism—the artificial and belated acquisition of that which our history has so far denied us? Thus our history does not move gently like a pendulum about a center of gravity, but explosively, in starts, like a motor.

Thomas Mann, the last viceroy of the German spirit, and the only one living at the end of Germany's bourgeois epoch, has written a work that was the best of all interpretations of our generation's place in the ages—*The Magic Mountain*. Like his young, spoiled merchant's son, we stood in our youth, perplexed, helpless, inactive in face of that world of immense wealth, with no sense of summons to any activity that mattered. Was it not supremely significant that this young man's destiny was wrested from that ban only by the war? And if that figure became the subject of a further work, where should we find the young man today, in the forties? Would he not have become a Nazi and then, like us, have turned away from Nazism in utter disgust?

There is a passage in another work of Thomas Mann's that is full of revealing knowledge of the motives of this rush of our middle class into Nazism. It describes that last ailing scion of the house of Buddenbrook, who passionately wanted once in his life to have no need to attend to any scruple, for once to be entirely master, entirely the strong man. Was it not perhaps our weakness that turned into that orgy of force and violence—a lack of true and genuine strength?

I hope the author will forgive me for thus calling his characters as our chief witnesses. But I have to quote him as the spiritual representative of a liberal German *bourgeoisie* that may have been potentially present but never took shape, either spiritually or politically. That great master remained the representative of a fictitious middle-class

world, and it was his tragedy and his greatness to be in the midst of a superficially active and multifarious community and yet solitary as only the great masters have been.

In the phases of political ripening our bourgeois epoch failed to mature. I will not enter into the reasons; the fact is indisputable. The German middle class was without substance or tradition. In no class of society was there a greater lack of intellectual activity or any political mission. Everything that happens is *überdeterminiert*, in Freud's phrase. The lack of a healthy and extensive middle class was one of the reasons for that delirium in which the forces of a radical revolutionism wrestled with those that appealed desperately to a German tradition.

We were antiliberal; I do not deny it. But our opposition was directed neither against the release of creative powers from repression nor against the eternally necessary criticism and continual testing, both of which will remain, as they are, truly liberal. Our opposition was directed against the pseudo-liberalism of the German middle class, which had no sense of any obligation as basis of the social order, or of any obligation to tradition, but merely lived its own life in entire indifference to any public duties, like the common man of the masses. Our opposition was directed against liberalism as a doctrine. In our Western civilization every sort of monism is intolerable, including that of a liberalism that regards itself as called to be the sole and exclusive basis of the ordering of life.

I have nothing more to say to you about events in Germany. I should never have ventured to write to you about

them, were it not that they disclose the actual questions that face us all. Was that will to a conservative revolution of which the Austrian writer had talked mere trifling? Were these efforts of ours idle efforts, since we had not matured into a free political life? The Conservative Revolution meant the overcoming of revolutionary utopias by the forces of continuance in our historic life, the forces of tradition. You will appreciate that these forces of tradition include nationalism and liberalism, rationalism and socialism. But only as parts of a higher whole. The utopian and doctrinaire is always the revolutionary and destructive.

There is a longing all over the world for a closing of the abyss that has stood open for centuries. A longing to enter into the "marriage" of which that unknown scholastic writer dreamed at the outset of the new age of individualism.

But you are afraid of a counter-revolution. You suspect the language of a reaction of more intelligence, perhaps, than has threatened us in the past. You are afraid of a new "Holy Alliance" of the forces of retrogression. It is that secret fear that determines the nature of the intellectual and political struggles of today. It is, in fact, inevitable that a reconstructive movement should come in opposition to the system of totalitarianism and nihilism. But why need this be a movement of reaction and retrogression? Is not the thing that is universally needed a union between liberalism, socialism, and conservatism?

It is discouraging and exasperating to see how little readiness there is among men to budge an inch from their custo-

mary ideas and judgments. At times like this we see the immense power of the factor of stupidity. Not mere inability to understand, but refusal! We see the close relationship between stupidity and evil. Perhaps stupidity is, in truth, a preliminary form of evil, with all the effects of metaphysical evil and daemonism. Both sterile and intolerable is the arrogant self-assurance that lacks all realization of the true state of things and confuses its own sterility with strength of character. It is not those who have changed, in these years of change, that should be suspect but those who have not changed. We recognize the existence of unchangeable moral values. But nothing is unchangeable in politics, and one of the first things that experience teaches us is that unchangeable and absolute moral values cannot be recognized at the point where we are dealing with human efforts, which necessarily always are and always will be subject to change.

Both democracy and Western civilization are a balancing of forces. Consequently the political form of Western civilization cannot but be democratic. And consequently every dictatorship and every claim to hegemony here is intolerable. But how is this equilibrium to be attained? It certainly can no longer come into existence and remain in existence automatically. It is to be hoped that there may come out of the equilibrium of the past what we may call an organized equilibrium. The great states and nations that have overcome doctrinairism or are in process of overcoming it will be the organizers of this new equilibrium and will close the abyss of revolution.

I have been glancing at Webster's volumes on Castle-reagh and the policy that brought the Napoleonic wars to an end. I compared with them Srbik's great story of Metternich. It remains a fine work, even though the author has since gone over to the Nazis. I had a look at Duff Cooper's vivid work on Talleyrand. Do not misinterpret the fact that I am fascinated by the similarity of the situation. Then, too, the abyss of a revolution was closed for a time. The night of reaction fell over the peoples, you will remind me. So, it is true, we have learned from our liberal historians. In reality, great men with wide knowledge did what seemed to them to be needed, according to the standards of that time, to prevent a fatal and self-destructive movement among the excited peoples and to secure a breathing space.

They achieved a balanced order. It endured, at all events, for half a century. They renounced revenge. There was no saddling of the French people with responsibility for the universal misery which, through twenty years, a conqueror of genius had spread through Europe in a tornado of wars.

They tried to organize a defensive system against the revolutionary nationalism that had emerged from the French Revolution. It was not the idea of territorial "barriers" against aggressive France that proved of service, any more than it would today against expansionist Germany. At that time Prussian conquests across the Rhine played in Pitt's great plan much the same part, as elements of security, as territorial cessions to the Western powers would play today against "Greater Prussia." The thing, however, that is of importance today is a political and intellectual

defense against revolutionism itself—revolutionism no longer in the shape simply of nationalism and socialism, but of the extremist type of conquering nihilism.

One principle formed the center and mainstay of their new order—that of legitimism. Today legitimism conveys nothing to us if we think only of monarchs and dynastic claims. But behind these is the great force of continuity. *Legitimism is the recognition of historic continuity as a determining factor of the maintenance of an ordered society.*

Equilibrium, legitimism, the Christian community—these were the ideas of a period that was concerned with problems of reconstruction similar to ours. These are the fruitful ideas that still have a message for us, though in a different form, the moment we liberate them from connection with police regimes, demagogic victimization, and reactionary absolutism. Our age has been much more deeply agitated than the Napoleonic. The elements of constitutionalism remaining to us are far weaker. Our crisis has struck to the marrow of humanity. Nevertheless, the elements of healing which truly great leaders found at that time for their nations remain available in our time.

In our “Conservative Revolution” we tried in Germany to apply those elements to our national problems. We failed because it was too early and because we ourselves were caught in doctrinaire ideas and utopias. I have just reread a book which was written in 1805, in the midst of the Napoleonic upheavals, by one of our few political authors of that time. It is Friedrich von Gentz’s *Das Europäische Gleichgewicht (The European Equilibrium)*. Some parts

of it might have been written for our own day. But the equilibrium that is our task cannot be merely an external one. It must be a balancing also of internal elements, social and economic, intellectual and moral, political and national. Only so are the three tasks of which I wrote at the outset, tasks whose solution is essential to any peace, to be solved.

If peace is to be permanent, it must be built up, not merely on the basis of economic co-operation and political guarantees, but in the spirit of a reconciliation such as was effected by the peace treaties of the Middle Ages, and a double one, external between nations and internal between social strata. Moral guarantees must be included. There must come into existence a "just" order—as just as is possible in human affairs.

But the abyss can only be closed and a lasting edifice of peace constructed if the Satanic element of our age is really shackled and subdued. I hope you will not imagine that I think a great peace could be a peace negotiated with the power that is the incorporation of Satanism. There can be no compromise with those who place themselves outside all law and order. There can be no peace of compromise with Nazism.

With that I will close. There can be no compromise with revolution. Every revolution lives by its claim to exclusive authority. Every revolution, even a conservative one. Thus it was a mistake to propose to make a conservative revolution. What we wanted and what we failed to achieve, and what will be the aim of the peace to come, is the *end of the revolution*.

